











# Practical Discourses ON *REGENERATION,* IN Ten SERMONS On the following SUBJECTS:

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|--|--|
| I. The Character of the Un-<br>regenerate.             | VIII. The Various Methods<br>in which those Influences<br>operate. |
| II, III. The Nature of Re-<br>generation.              | IX. Directions to the a-<br>wakened Sinner.                        |
| IV, V, VI. The Necessity<br>and Importance of it.      | X. An Address to the Rege-<br>nerate.                              |
| VII. The Divine Influences<br>necessary to produce it. |  |

PREACH'D at *NORTHAMPTON*,  
And Publish'd at the earnest Request of  
many that heard them.

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By *P. DODDRIDGE, D.D.*

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Ικανη παραμετία τῶν πονῶν, καὶ πατήση μεῖζων, οἷα  
εἰπίω συνειδήντας δύναται ΠΡΟΣ ΑΡΓΣΚΕΙΑΝ ΤΟΥ  
ΘΕΟΥ οὐνόθεις καὶ ρυθμίζων τὴν Διδασκαλίαν.

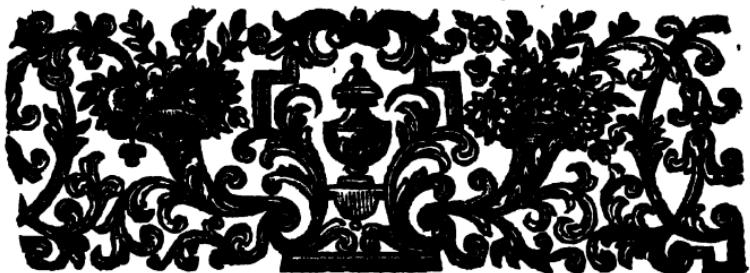
Chrysostom. de Sacerd. Lib. v. §. 7.

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*L O N D O N,*

Printed and sold by M. FENNER, at "the Turk's-Head"  
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## T H E P R E F A C E.

**I**T is undoubtedly the *Duty* of every wise and good Man to be forming *Schemes* for the Service of GOD and his Fellow-Creatures *in future Years*, if he be continued to them ; and it will be his *Prudence* to do it *early in Life*, that he may be gradually preparing to execute them, in the most advantagious Manner he can. But while a *Man's Heart* is thus *devising his Way*, the *Lord directeth his Steps*. And as many such *Schemes* will probably be left unfinish'd *at Death*, which will quickly come to *break off our Purposes and the Thoughts of our Hearts* ; so it is not improbable, that they who humbly and obediently follow the *Leadings of Divine Providence and Grace*, may often find themselves called

out on a sudden to *Services*, which, but a little before, were quite unthought of by them.

THIS has been the Case with me in most of the *Sermons* I have publish'd, of which very few were composed with any View to the *Prefs*; and it is most remarkably so with respect to these *on Regeneration*. My much honoured Friend *Dr. Wright* (besides many other excellent Persons) has handled the *Subject* in so judicious and lively a Manner, and through the great Goodness of GOD to us, so many Thousands of his *Treatise upon it* are dispersed in all Parts of our Land, that I could hardly have believed any one who had told me, I should *thus* have resumed it; nor had I the least Intention of doing it, when I began that *Course of Lectures*, which I now offer to my Reader's Perusal.

I DID indeed think it necessary last Year, to treat the *Subject* more largely, than I had ever done before; knowing in the general how *important* it is, and observing that several *Controversies* had about that Time been raised concerning it; which (tho' I do not judge it necessary to mention the Particulars of them,) I was ready to fear, might have had, an ill Influence to unsettle Mens Minds, and either to lead them into some particular *Errors*, or into a general *Apprehension* that it was a mere Point of *Speculation*, about which

*The P R E F A C E.* vii

which it was not necessary to form any Judgment at all \*.

THAT *these Discourses* might be more generally *useful*, I determined to preach them on *Lord's-Day Evenings*, that those of my Neighbours who were not my stated Hearers, might, if they thought proper, have an Opportunity of attending them: And accordingly they were attended to the last with uncommon Diligence, a great many such Persons, of different Persuasions and Communions, making up a Part of the Auditory. As *practical Instruction and Improvement* was the main Thing I had in View, I knew it was necessary to make my *Discourses* as plain, as free, and as serious as I could. But before I had finished near half of my *Scheme*, several of my Hearers earnestly requested, that the *Sermons* might be *published*; and the Request grew more extensive and importunate every Week, with this additional Circumstance, (which I much regarded,) that some very pious and judicious Friends at a Distance, being providentially brought to the hearing of some of these *Lectures*, strongly concurred in the Desire, expressing a very cheerful Hope that the *Reading* of what they had *heard* might be useful in distant Parts of the Land,

A 4 which

\* See Mr. Hebden's Appendix to his late Discourse on REGENERATION.

viii      *The P R E F A C E.*

which they assured me they would endeavour to spread them, as Opportunity might offer. As the Advice of several of my *Brethren in the Ministry* was joined with all this, I thought myself bound in Duty at length to comply; which I was the rather encouraged to do, from the several Instances in which I had Reason to believe, the *Divine Blessing* had in some Measure attended *these Sermons* from the Pulpit, and had made them the *Means* of producing and advancing the *Change* they described and enforced.

ON these Considerations, as soon as I returned from that long Journey, on which I set out the Day after *these Lect: s* were concluded, I applied myself to recollect the Substance of them as well as I could, from the *short Hints* I had written of them, with the Assistance of those *Notes* which some of my Friends had taken after me in *Characters*. Some Things are, perhaps, omitted, tho' I believe but very few; some contracted, and some enlarged; but my Hearers will find them in the main what they heard. It cost me more Labour than I was aware, *from such Materials* to reduce them into their present Form; and I hope the Multitude of my other Busines will be allowed as an Apology, if I proceeded in them ~~lower~~ than some might expect; especially as I was obliged

obliged first to publish my *Sermons on Salvation by Grace*, which may be considered as a Sort of *Supplement* to these, and are therefore printed in a Form fit to bind up with them, as I suppose they generally will be.

I SHALL leave it to my Reader, to observe for himself the *Manner* and *Method* in which I have handled my Subject, without giving him a particular View of it here: Only must beg Leave to tell him in the general, that I hope he will find, I have not presumed so far on the *Sublimity* of my Subject, as to talk *without determinate Ideas*; for which Reason, I have omitted many *Prases* used particularly of late by some pious and worthy Persons, because I freely own, that as I cannot find them in my *Bible*, so neither can I understand their exact Meaning; and it seems very improper to embarrass such *plain Discourses* as these with a Language, which not being thoroughly Master of, I may chance to misapply, supposing those *Prases* to be really more proper, than I can at present apprehend they are. I have endeavoured to keep to *one Idea* of *REGENERATION*, which I take to be *that* which the *Scripture* suggests: By *REGENERATION* I mean “ a prevailing Disposition of the Soul to universal Holiness, produc'd and cherished by the Influences of God's Spirit ” on

## \* The P R E F A C E.

" on our Hearts, operating in a Manner  
" suitable to the Constitution of our Na-  
" ture, as rational and accountable Crea-  
" tures." If *this* be, (as I think I have  
proved at large, that it is,) the *Scriptural*  
*Notion* of it, 'twill follow, that nothing  
which may be found where *this* is not, or  
may not be found where *this* is, can be  
REGENERATION in the *Scripture Sense*,  
which is *that Sense*, in which we are much  
more concern'd, than we are in *that* to  
which *any Human Writers*, whether *An-*  
*cient* or *Modern*, may think proper to ap-  
ply it.

If the *Doctrine* which I have endeavour'd  
in the whole Course of *these Sermons* to  
confirm and illustrate by the *Word of GOD*,  
be in one Form or another generally taught  
by my *Brethren in the Ministry*, of whatever  
*Denomination*, I rejoice in it, for their own  
Sakes, as well as for that of the People under  
their Care. I am very little inclined to  
contend about *Technical Phrases* of Human  
*Invention*, which have with equal Frailty  
been *idolized* by some, and *anathematized*  
by others. We shall, I hope, learn more  
and more to *bear one another's Burthens*,  
and to study the kindest Interpretations  
which the Words of each other will ad-  
mit. But I must take the Liberty to say,  
I am in my *Conscience* perswaded, that *this*  
View

*View of Things* which is here proposed, tho' perhaps not very *fashionable*, is in the general so *edifying*, and so naturally leads to the frequent Review of many other important *Doctrines of Christianity*, which are closely connected with it, that I am well satisfied it will be our *Wisdom* to adhere to it, and to make it very familiar to our own *Minds*, and to those of our *Hearers*. Nor can I imagine, that any *Variety* in the *Idioms* of different *Languages*, or the *Customs* of different *Ages* and *Nations*, can be a sufficient Reason for bringing *Scripture Phrases* into *Disuse*, while we keep to the *original Ideas* signified by them. There seems to be a peculiar *Felicity* in them to express *Divine Truth*; and they will undoubtedly be found the *safest Vehicle of Religious Knowledge*, and the *surest Band of Union* among *Christians*; while, however we may differ in other *Matters*, we so generally agree in acknowledging, that our *Bibles* contain the *Oracles of GOD*.

LET us therefore, who under *different Denominations* are honoured with the *Ministry* of the *Everlasting Gospel*, agree, for a while at least, to suspend our Debates upon less necessary Subjects, that we may with united Efforts concur in prosecuting that great *Design*, for which the *Gospel* was revealed, the *Spirit given*, and our *Office* instituted. And since it is so evident, that *Irreligion*

religion has grown upon us, while we have been attending to *other*, and to be sure *smaller Matters*, let us by a plain, serious, and zealous Way of *preaching* the most *vital Truths of Christianity*, joined with a diligent Inspection of the Souls committed to our Care, try what can be done towards preventing the Progress of this growing *Apostacy*, and recovering the Ground we have already lost. Ignorant and prejudiced Peop'ls may perhaps accuse us of *Bigotry* or *Enthusiasm*; but let us do our best to convince them of their Error by the *Candor of our Temper*, and the *Prudence of our Conduct*; and remember, that as *Chrysostom* excellently speaks, in those lively Words which I have inserted in the *Title-Page*, “ It is a sufficient Con-  
“ solation for our Labours, and far more  
“ than an Equivalent for all, if we may have,  
“ a Testimony in our Consciences, that we  
“ compose and regulate our Discourses in  
“ such a Manner, as may be *approved* by  
“ GOD, in whose Name we speak.”

NORTHAMPTON,  
Nov. 7. 1741.

• T H E •



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PUBLISHED  
BY THE AUTHOR

1859

# SERMONS

ON

## REGENERATION.

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### SERMON I.

#### Of the CHARACTER of the UNREGenerate.

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EPHES. ii. 1, 2.

*And you hath he quickened, who were dead in Trespasses and Sins; wherein in Time past ye walked according to the Course of this World, according to the Prince of the Power of the Air, the Spirit that now worketh in the Children of Disobedience.*

MONG all the various Trusts which Men can repose in each other, hardly any appears to me more solemn and tremendous, than the Direction of their Sacred Time, and especially of those Hours which they spend in the Exercise of Hublick Devotion.

B

2 *How necessary 'tis for Ministers SER. I.*

tion. These Seasons take up so small a Part of our Lives, when compared with that which the Labours and Recreations of them demand; and so much depends upon their being managed aright; that We who are called to assist you in the Employment and Improvement of them, can hardly be too solicitous, that we discharge the Trust, in a Manner which we may answer to God and to you. If this Thought dwelt upon the Mind with due Weight, it will have some sensible Influence upon our Discourses to you, as well as on the Strain of those Addresses which we present to the Throne of Grace in your Name, and on your Account. We shall not be over anxious about the Order of Words, the Elegance of Expression, or the little Graces of Composition or Delivery; but shall study to speak on the most important Subjects, and to handle them with such Gravity and Seriousness, with such Solemnity and Spirit, as may, through the Divine Blessing, be most likely to penetrate the Hearts of our Hearers, to awaken those that are entirely unconcerned about Religion, and to animate and assist those, who being already acquainted with it, desire to make continual Advances, which will be the Case of every truly Good Man.

It is my earnest Prayer for myself, and for my Brethren in the Ministry of all Denominations

SER. I. *to press to Inward Religion.* 3

nominations, that we may, in this Respect, approve our Wisdom and Integrity to God, and commend ourselves to the Consciences of all Men<sup>a</sup>. It is our Charge, as we shall answer it another Day to the GOD of the Spirits of all Flesh, to use our most prudent and zealous Endeavours, to make Men truly wise and good, virtuous and happy: But to this Purpose, it is by no Means sufficient to content ourselves, merely with attempting to reform the Immoralities and Irregularities of their Lives, and to bring them to an External Behaviour, decent, honourable, and useful. An Undertaking like this, while the Inward Temper is neglected, even when it may seem most effectual, will be but like painting the Face of one who is ready to die, or labouring to repair a ruinous House, by plastering and whitewashing its Walls, while its Foundations are decay'd. There is an awful Passage in *Ezekiel* to this Purpose, which I hope we shall often recollect <sup>b</sup>: *Wo to the foolish Prophets,—because they have seduced my People, saying, Peace, when there was no Peace; and one built up a Wall, and lo, others daubed it with untempered Mortar: Say unto them that daub it with untempered Mortar, that it shall fall:—Thus saith the Lord G O D, I will even rent it with a stormy Wind in my Fury; and there shall be an overflowing Shower in mine*

B 2 .

Anger,

<sup>a</sup> 2 Cor. iv. 2.

<sup>b</sup> Ezek. xiii. 10, —14.

*Anger, and great Hail-stones in my Fury to  
consume it : So will I break down the Wall  
that ye have daubed with untempered Mortar,  
and bring it down to the Ground, so that the  
Foundation thereof shall be discovered, and it  
shall fall, and ye shall be consumed in the Midst  
thereof ; and ye shall know that I am the  
L O R D .*

If there be any, in one Body of Christians, or another, that abett Men's natural Disposition to flatter themselves *in a Way that is not good*, by encouraging them to hope for Salvation, because they were regularly baptized in their Infancy ; because they have diligently attended on Publick Worship, in its established, or its separate Forms ; or merely because they do no Body any Harm, but are rather kind and helpful to others ; or because their Faith is orthodox, their Transports of Affection warm, or their Assurance confident ; I pray God to awaken them by the Power of his Grace, before they are consumed, with their Hearers, in the Ruins of their deceitful Building. Those of you who are my stated Hearers can witness for me, that in this respect *I have delivered my own Soul*. It has been the steady Tenor of my Doctrine among you, that our Hope and Confidence must be in Christ, and not in ourselves ; and that,

<sup>if</sup>  
c Ezek. /xxiii. 9.

if we desire to be interested in the Righteousness he has wrought out, and in the Blessings he has purchased by his sacred Blood, we must be experimentally acquainted with the Work of God's renewing Grace upon our Souls, curing the inward Distempers of our degenerate Hearts, and transforming us into the Image of his Holiness : This is what we are taught in Scripture to call by the Name of **REGENERATION** ; and considering how much the Subject is neglected by some, and I fear I may add, misrepresented and disguised by others, I apprehend I shall profitably employ an *Evening-Hour* for several succeeding Sabbaths, in giving a larger Account than I have yet done, of the *Scripture Doctrine* on this important Subject, in its various Parts. It shall be my . . . in the Series of these Discourses, as God shall enable me, to speak the Words of Truth and Sobriety<sup>d</sup>; and I intreat you to have Recourse to the Law and to the Testimony<sup>e</sup>, that you may judge of the Truth and Weight of what I say. I desire not to be regarded any farther, than I produce Evidence from Reason and Scripture : But so far as we are disregarded, while we have the concurrent Testimony of both, our Hearers must see to it ; and their Danger will then be proportionable to the Impor-

tance of those Truths, which their Negligence, or their Prejudice, engage them either to reject, or to overlook.

*the*  
THE *Plan*, on which I intend to proceed in the Course of these *Lectures*, is this:

I. I WILL endeavour to describe the *Character* of those, whom we may properly call Persons in an *Unregenerate State*.

II. I WILL describe the *Nature* of that *Change*, which may properly be called *Regeneration*, or *Conversion*.

III. I WILL shew at large the absolute *Necessity* of it, and the consequent *Misery* of those that are *Strangers* to it.

IV. I SHALL endeavour to prove the *Reality* and *Necessity* of the *Divine Influences* on the Mind, in the Production of such a Change.

V. I SHALL describe some of those various *Methods*, by which GOD is pleased to operate in the Production of this holy and important Work.

VI. I SHALL propose some *Advises* to those who are already awakened, as to the Method

Method in which they are to seek Renewing and Converting Grace. After which,

II. I SHALL conclude these Discourses with an *Address* to those who have experienced this *happy Change*, as to the Manner in which they ought to be affected with such a Series of Sermons as this, and the Improvement they should make of what they are to hear, and what they have felt agreeable to it.

I SHOULD be peculiarly inexcusable, if I entred upon such a Subject, without earnest and importunate Prayers to the Fountain of Light, Grace, and Holiness, that while you hear of this important Doctrine, you may have that Experimental Knowledge of it, without which such Discourses will indeed seem obscure and enthusiastical, according to the Degree in which they are rational and spiritual. I shall only add, that these *Lectures* will take their Rise from a Variety of *Texts*, which I shall not, according to my usual Method, largely open and dilate upon, but only touch on them as so many *Motto's* to the respective *Sermons* to which they are prefixed.

As I intend not *Philosophical Essays*, but plain, practical, and popular Addresses, I shall begin,

8      *Character of the Unregenerate, SER. I.*

FIRST, With describing the *Character* of those, whom we may properly call *Unconverted* and *Unregenerate Persons.*

IT is absolutely necessary that I should do this, that you may respectively know your own personal Concern in what is further to be laid before you in the Process of these *Lectures.*

Now you have the *general Character* of such, in the Words of my *Text*; and a very sad one it is: They are represented, as *dead in Trespasses and Sins*, utterly indisposed both for the Actions and Enjoyments of the Spiritual and Divine Life; as *walking according to the Course of this World*, a sad Intimation that it was the State of the ~~General~~ *Generality* of Mankind; nay, *according to the Prince of the Power of the Air*, that impure and wicked Spirit, who works, or exerts his Energy, *in the Children of Disobedience*, that is, in those who reject and despise the *Gospel*; in which it is implied, (and a dreadful Implication it is,) that the Course and Conduct of those who *reject the Gospel*, is *according to the Desire and Instigation of the Prince of Darkness*: They are going on as the *Devil himself* would have them, and chuse that Path for themselves, which he chuses for them, as leading them to ~~most~~ certain and most aggravated Ruin.

AND

AND who are these unhappy Persons ? Surely there must be *some of them* among us : For who can flatter himself, that in so numerous an Assembly, *the Course of all* is different from *that of the World* ; and that *all* have happily triumphed over the Artifices of that *accursed Spirit*, who is, by God's righteous Permission, become *its Prince*, while it continues in its apostate State ? I shall however think it a very happy Point gained, if I could *convince* any of you, who are justly liable to that Conviction, that *you are the Men* ; if I could, as it were, render visible to your Eyes, those subtil, yet strongly complicated *Chains*, in which *Satan* is binding you, and by which he is drawing you on to Eternal Ruin ; that you might *recover yourselves out of the Snare of the Devil, who are in Captive by him at his Pleasure*.

I AM this Evening to describe the Character of Unregenerate Men : But I cannot pretend to do it in all the Variety of Circumstances which may attend it. I shall therefore mention only some Particulars which are most important, and which most certainly demonstrate a Person to be of that wretched Number. There are a great Variety of Countenances in the Human Species ; yet the principal Features in all are the same,

tho'

tho' their Proportion and Lineaments may differ: And I apprehend, the *Characters* which I am now to lay down, will most of them suit *every Unregenerate Person*; for they may appear in various Persons in different Degrees and different Instances. I shall chiefly lay down these Characters in *Negatives*, as I apprehend it is the safest Way; and only would observe, what you may easily imagine, that *I speak only of the Adult*; for I would cautiously avoid intangling this Discourse, with what relates purely to the Case of *Infants*, lest *Satan should get an advantage over us*, and turn that into an Occasion to amuse *Curiosity*, which I humbly hope, under the Influence of the Spirit of **GOD**, will be a Means of awakening *Conviction*, and of breaking that delusive *Peace*, in which like *the Strong Man armed* he keeps his Vassals, till the fatal Hour come which is to compleat their Ruin.

To wave the Formality of laboured Demonstrations in a Case which admits of such easy Evidence, I shall go upon this obvious Principle in the whole of my reasoning; " that to be *regenerate*, and to be *born of GOD*, are in Scripture Terms of the same Import; and consequently, that whatever Temper and Disposition is in Scripture declared to be inconsistent with the Character of a Child of GOD, must necessarily

" rily

SER. I. *a Temper suited to a Child of God.* 11

"rily denominate a Man *an Unregenerate Person.*" And one would think *this Principle* could hardly be disputed, since all that allow of *Regeneration* at all, in a Christian sense, seem to understand by it *that Change*, whatever it is, by which a Person is made *a Child of GOD*, and by Consequence *an Heir of Heaven.*

Now on *this Principle*, you may take the *Marks of an Unregenerate Person* in such Particulars as these; and let those, whose Consciences own them, hear and tremble.

- 1. THE Soul "that never seriously enquired into its Spiritual State," is, beyond all doubt, an *Unregenerate Soul.*

THE *Apostle* earnestly presses it upon the Christians to whom he wrote, that they should diligently examine themselves whether they were *in the Faith*; and he who has entirely neglected to do it, seems to express, not merely a Forgetfulness of Religion, but even a Contempt of it too. Nevertheless be it known unto you, Sirs, that an humble Return to GOD, and a cordial Dedication of Soul to his Service, is not so slight an Act of a Man's Life, that it should pass without any Observation in doing it, or any serious Reflection on having done it. *Religion*

ligion is a deliberate Thing; it brings a Man seriously to consider his *Ways*, that he may turn his Feet to GOD's Commandments<sup>h</sup>; to search and try them, that he may turn again unto the Lord<sup>i</sup>. A Good Man is so impress'd with the Thoughts of God, and of Eternity, that perhaps he is rather ready to be over anxiously afraid and suspicious, in a Matter of so great Importance; and therefore will review, on the one Hand, the Plan of Salvation that God has laid down in his Word; and on the other, the Correspondency to it that he may discover in his own Soul. And if there are any of you that have never been thus employed, any that have never separated your selves a while from other Employments, that you might seek and intermeddle with this Divine Wisdom<sup>k</sup>, you are assuredly Strangers to it. If there are any of you, that have never studied God's Word, to learn his Will from thence; that have never attended to Sermons, that you might try your selves by them, and if possible, carry home something of the chief of what you hear, to assist your retired and more diligent Enquiries; you may now come to a very quick Conclusion, and before you leave this Place, yea, before I proceed to any further Particulars, you may set it down as the memorable Beginning of these *Lec-*

*tures,*

<sup>h</sup> Psal. cxix. 59. / <sup>i</sup> Lam. iii. 40. <sup>k</sup> Prov. xviii. 1.

SER. I. as never enquir'd into their State. 13  
tures, and of this Discourse, " I am already proved to be an *Unregenerate Creature* ; " " I am in the *Gall of Bitterness*, and in the " *Bond of Iniquity*!" Nay, you may add, that there are perhaps Thousands of those that are yet *Unregenerate Sinners*, who have not been so careless and so insensible as you. For indeed, Sirs, a Man may begin an *Examination*, and start back from the Prosecution of it; before it is brought to any important Issue; or trying himself by *false Characters*, he may come to a *Conclusion*, which will be so much the more dangerous, as it has been the more deliberate. For the sake of such therefore, I add,

2. The Soul " that is not deeply convinced of its Guilt before GOD, and desirous to seek Deliverance from it by the *Lord Jesus Christ*," is still in an *Unregenerate State*.

ALL the Promises of GOD's Paternal Favour do certainly imply the Promise of Forgiveness; and you well know, that these are appropriated to such as *bumble themselves before GOD*: And that *Humbling* which is merely *External*, and implies no deep Sense of *Inward Guilt*, can pass for very little with that

<sup>1</sup> Acts viii. 23.

14      Such are Unregenerate    SER. I.  
that God, who searches the Heart, and tries  
the Reins of the Children of Men<sup>m</sup>.

THE Scripture assures us, that *whosoever believes that Jesus is the Christ, is born of GOD<sup>n</sup>*; and nothing can be more certain from the whole Tenor of it, than that *he that believes not shall be damned<sup>o</sup>*; and surely a State of *Damnation* is not, and cannot be, a State of *Regeneration*. But what is *this Faith in Christ?* Is it no more than a bare notional Perswasion, that he is *the Son of GOD?* If this were all, *the Devils themselves believe<sup>p</sup>*; and many were the Instances, in which you know that they confessed it, and trembled before him. You cannot then be ignorant, that *the Faith*, to which the Promises of Salvation are made, is *a Faith, which receives the Lord Jesus Christ in all his Offices*; which trusts his ~~A-~~<sup>At-</sup>*tonement*, as well as admits his *Revelation*; and flies to him for *Righteousness and Life*. And how can that Man seek *Righteousness* from *Christ*, who is insensible of his own *Guilt?* or how can he depend upon him for *Life*, who is not aware that he is under a Sentence of *Death and Condemnation?*

BUT imagine not you are secure, because you *acknowledge* your selves to be *Sinners*. If that *Acknowledgment* be flight and formal,

it

<sup>m</sup> Jer. xvii. 10.      <sup>n</sup> 1 John v. 1.      <sup>o</sup> Mark  
xvi. 16.      <sup>p</sup> Jam. ii. 19.

SER. I. *as are not convinc'd of their Guilt.* 15  
it shows you are Strangers to the Operation  
of that *Spirit*, whose Office it is to *convince*  
*Men of Sin*<sup>1</sup>. If you have not been made  
sensible of the Pollution of your Hearts, as  
well as the Rebellion of your Lives; if you  
have not *received* as it were a *Sentence of*  
*Death in your selves*, and submitted to that  
*Selfe*-*vice* as righteous, though ever so dread-  
ful; if you have not been made to *loathe and*  
*abhor your selves*, and to *repent in Dust and*  
*Ashes*<sup>2</sup>; if you have not *laid your Hand on*  
*your Mouth*<sup>3</sup>, and *your Mouth in the Dust*<sup>4</sup>,  
*crying out, Unclean, unclean*<sup>5</sup>; and in this  
Sense at least, adopted that pathetick Com-  
plaint, *O wretched Man that I am, who shall*  
*deliver me*<sup>6</sup>! it is a certain Sign, that *Sin*  
*still reigns in your mortal Bodies*<sup>7</sup>, and is unto this Day bringing forth *Fruit unto Death*<sup>8</sup>.

3. THE Soul “ that is unconcerned about the Favour of GOD, and Communion with him”, is still in an *Unregenerate State.*

COMMON Reason may tell you, that a Soul destitute of the *Love of GOD*, can never be the Object of his complacential Regards; and that it is impossible you should *love him*, while

<sup>1</sup> John xvi. 8.      <sup>2</sup> Job xliv. 6.      <sup>3</sup> Mic. vii. 16.  
<sup>2</sup> Lam. iii. 29.      <sup>4</sup> Lev. xiii. 45.      <sup>5</sup> Rom. vii. 24.  
<sup>3</sup> Rom. vi. 12.      <sup>7</sup> Rom. vii. 5.

## 16      Such are Unregenerate    SER. I.

while you are *unconcerned* about *his Favour*, and habitually *indifferent* to converse with him. You believe, *there is a GOD*; you acknowledge, that he is the great *Benefactor* of the whole World; you know, your *Happiness* depends upon *his Favour*; you *wish*, therefore, that you may *enjoy it*; that is, you *wish*, that some way or other you may be *happy*, rather than *miserable*. But let Conscience say, whether you have ever felt, that *in his Favour is Life*<sup>a</sup>? whether you have ever known, what it is to cry out with Intenseness and Ardour of Soul, *Lord, lift up the Light of thy Countenance upon me*<sup>a</sup>! Alas, Sirs, had you been Sons, GOD would have *sent the Spirit of his Son into your Hearts*<sup>b</sup>; and if this be not the sincere, *if* it be not the habitual Language of your Soul; if you do not thus earnestly desire to live under the Manifestations of the Divine Love, and to be able to say, *Truly our Communion is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ*<sup>c</sup>; you are spiritually dead, and under the fatal Influences of that *Carnal Mind*, which being *Enmity against GOD*<sup>d</sup>, engages Men to live contented *without GOD in the World*<sup>e</sup>, so long as *their Corn and their Wine increase*<sup>f</sup>. A Heart thus alienated from *GOD*, was

<sup>a</sup> Psal. xxx. 5.<sup>c</sup> 1 John i. 3.<sup>b</sup> Psal. iv. 7.<sup>a</sup> Psal. iv. 6.<sup>d</sup> Rom. viii. 7.<sup>b</sup> Gal. iv. 6.<sup>e</sup> Eph. ii. 12.

SER. I. *as are careless of GOD's Favour.* 17  
was never savingly turned to him, and can have  
no just Reason to imagine itself the Object  
of his Paternal Favour.

- 4. THE Soul "that is destitute of a  
" sincere Love to Mankind", has  
Reason to consider itself as in an  
• *Unregenerate State.*

You may, "perhaps, think it unnecessary  
to mention this; but the *Apostle* was un-  
doubtedly a much better Judge, and his  
own Words suggest this Particular to me:  
*Beloved, let us love one another: for Love is  
of GOD; and every one that loveth, is born  
of GOD, and knoweth GOD: He that  
loveth not, knoweth not GOD, and conse-  
quently cannot be born of him; for GOD  
is Love*<sup>s</sup>. And our *Lord* strongly intimates  
the same Thought, when he exhorts his  
Disciples to the most universal and unlimited  
*Benevolence* by this Argument, *that ye may  
be the Children of your Father which is in  
Heaven*<sup>h</sup>; plainly implying, that otherwise  
they could not really be *born of GOD*, or  
claim him for their Father. *Regeneration*  
is to form a Man for intimate Communion  
with the general *Assembly and Church of the*  
*First-born*<sup>i</sup>, and to prepare him for the Re-  
gion of compleat and everlasting *Love*; and

<sup>s</sup> John iv. 7, 8. <sup>h</sup> Matt. v. 45. <sup>i</sup> Heb. xii. 23.  
•C the

the First-Fruits of it are to appear, and so be manifested here. *It is a faithful Saying, that they who have believed in GOD, shou'd be careful to maintain good Works<sup>k</sup> ; and unfeigned Love is to be the Root of them:* So that if you cannot stand this Trial, your Religious Hopes are all delusive and vain.

LET me intreat you therefore, that you would now look into your Lives, and Hearts. Do any of the *malignant Passions* harbour there? Ask yourselves, “ Is there any one “ of my Fellow-Creatures, whom I *wish* “ to see *miserable*; or would *make so*, if it “ were in my Power to do it by the secret “ Act of my Will, so that no Mortal on “ Earth should ever know me to be *the* “ Cause of the Calamity?” If it be *so*, and this be your settled Temper, *you hate your Brethren*, and *are Murtherers<sup>l</sup>*; and therefore *are the Children of the Devil, who was a Murtherer from the Beginning*: And we may thus say of you, in the very Words of our Lord, who never uttered a rash Censure, *You are of your Father the Devil*, for his Passions you cherish, and his Lusts you would do <sup>m</sup>.

BUT reflect farther, If you *wish others no Harm*, do you really *wish them well?* and that so really, and so sincerely, as to be ready to *do them Good*? For merely to *say unto them*,

<sup>k</sup> Tit. iii. 8.    <sup>l</sup> 1 John iii. 15.    <sup>m</sup> John viii. 44.

SER. I. as have no Love to Mankind. 19

them, Depart in Peace; be ye warmed, and filled<sup>n</sup>: when you have it in your Power to help them, is at once to mock the Poor, and to despise him that made him<sup>o</sup>. You that are conscious of a mean selfish Temper, and wrap your selves up, as it were, in your own separate Interest, or in those of your own Families, and can feel a Concern for no others; you that devise what you may imagine shrewd and prudent Things, but none that are liberal and compassionate; you whose Eye does not affect your Heart, when you see the Distresses of your Brethren, while you have this World's Good, how dwelleth the Love of GOD in you<sup>p</sup>? how can you imagine, you are the Children of him, whom you so little resemble?

Nay, permit me to add once more upon this Head, that if all your Compassion is only moved by Mens Temporal Calamities, and works not in any Degree with respect to their Spiritual and Eternal Interests, you have Reason to fear, that 'tis no better than an unsanctified Humanity; and indeed, that you never have learnt the Worth of your own Souls, while you set so little Value on the Souls of others, even of those, to whom you profess and intend Friendship. And this concluding Hint is of Importance to prevent a dangerous Mistake, in which too

many *good-natured Sinners* are ready to flatter themselves, and in which perhaps others are too ready to join in flattering them.

5. He “ that does not know what it is,  
“ to struggle with Indwelling Sin, and  
“ heartily to resolve against indulging  
“ it in any Kind or Degree,” is un-  
doubtedly still in an *Unregenerate State*.

You will observe, I do not say, “ that every one who knows what it is, to feel a Struggle in his own Mind, when assaulded by Temptations to Sin, is a truly Good Man : ” The contrary is dreadfully apparent. A Principle of *Natural Conscience* often makes very strong Remonstrances against *Sin*, and sends out bitter Cries when subjected to its Violence ; and this is far from denominating a Man a *real Christian*; that it rather illustrates the *Power of Sin*, and aggravates its *Guilt*. But when a Man’s Inclinations run entirely *one Way*, and when he gives a Swing to his *natural Passions* without any Guard or Restraint ; when he is a Stranger to any *inward Conflict* with himself, and any *Victory* over his own Lusts, and his corrupted Will ; it is a certain Sign, - he is yet under the Dominion of *Satan*, and is even to be numbered among the *camerl* of his Slaves. For *they that are Christ’s, have crucified*

SER. I. *as do not strive against all Sin.* 21  
*crucified the Flesh, with the Affections and*  
*Lusts<sup>q</sup>; have learnt to deny themselves<sup>r</sup>, and*  
*to mortify their Members upon Earth<sup>s</sup>.*

It is also of great Importance to add,  
that there must be " a Resolution to op-  
pose Sin in every Kind, and in every  
Degree: " For *be that is born of GOD*  
*sinneth not<sup>t</sup>*; nay, it is elsewhere said, *He*  
*cannot commit Sin<sup>u</sup>*: And though it is too  
visibly true in Fact, and apparent from se-  
veral other Passages in the very Epistle  
whence these Words are taken, that this  
Expression is to be interpreted with *some Li-*  
*mitation*; yet *the least* that it can be imagined  
to signify *is this*, that *he does not wilfully*  
*allow himself in the Practice of any Sin.* He  
*has learnt to hate every false Way, and to*  
*esteem all GOD's Precepts, concerning all*  
*Things, to be right<sup>w</sup>*: So that upon the  
*whole, if he might have his Request, and GOD*  
*would grant him the Thing that he longs for*,  
it would be this, *to sin no more*, and to get rid  
of every Sentiment, Desire, and Affection,  
in any Degree contrary to the Purity of  
God's Nature and Law. If therefore there  
be any of you, that *spare One accursed Thing*,  
though you should seem eager on destroy-  
ing all the rest; if it be the secret Lan-

C 3 guage

<sup>q</sup> Gal. v. 24.      <sup>r</sup> Matt. xvi. 24.      <sup>s</sup> Col. iii. 5.  
<sup>t</sup> 1 John v. 18.      <sup>u</sup> 1 John iii. 9.      <sup>w</sup> Psal. cxix.  
128.      \* Job vi. 8.

guage of your Soul, “ There is but one Lust,  
 “ that I will indulge ; there is but one Temp-  
 “ tation, that I will comply with ; ” I nev-  
 er ceive, your Hearts are not right in the sight  
 of GOD<sup>y</sup>; for though you could, accord-  
 ing to your pretended Purpose, keep all the  
 rest of the Law, and yet offend in this one Point  
 alone, you would in effect be a Transgressor  
 of all<sup>z</sup>. In short, *He that committeth Sin, is of*  
*the Devil<sup>a</sup>*; but *he that is begotten of GOD,*  
*keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth*  
*him not<sup>b</sup>.*

6. HE “ that does not know what it is,  
 “ to overcome this World, and to  
 “ place his Happiness in another,” is  
 yet in an *Unregenerate State.*

THIS is another of those certain Marks  
 which GOD has given us of his own Chil-  
 dren. *Whatsoever is born of GOD,* (as it  
 very emphatically express'd in the Original,) *overcometh the World<sup>c</sup>.* It is not, you see,  
 the extraordinary Attainment of a few more  
 eminent Christians; but it is an essential  
 Branch of *every Good Man's Character*: For  
 he is *begotten again unto a lively Hope, by the*  
*Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,*  
 even

<sup>y</sup> Acts viii. 21.

<sup>z</sup> Jam. ii. 10.

<sup>a</sup> I John iii. 8.

<sup>b</sup> I John v. 18.

<sup>c</sup> I John v. 4. *παντας τον γεγενημένον*  
*εκ του Θεού.*

*even to the Hope of an Inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away*<sup>a</sup>.

~~You~~ have Reason therefore to judge very uncomfortably concerning your State, if you are Strangers to this *lively Hope*; which is a very different Thing from that *Hope to be saved*, of which some People talk in so indolent, not to say, in so profane a Manner, as to shew, that it is *the Hope of the Hypocrite*, which *will perish, when GOD takes away his Soul*<sup>c</sup>. If you are conscious to yourselves, that you *mind Earthly Things*, your *End* will be *Destruction*<sup>f</sup>; for having *your Heart on Earth*, it is plain *your only Treasure is here*<sup>e</sup>: And if you govern your selves by *Worldly Maxims* alone, and your great Care be to obtain those Riches and Honours, which the Children of the *World* pursue; if the Importance of *Eternity* has never appear'd in such a Light, as to make you judge every thing trifling that can come in Competition with it; nay, whatever your Views of *Eternity* have been, if you are not practically carrying on a Scheme for it; and if you cannot, and do not deny your *Worldly Interest*, when it cannot be secured without hazarding your *Eternal Hopes*; 'tis plain, you are *Friends of the World*, in such a Sense as none can

C 4 : be,

<sup>a</sup> 1 Pet. i. 3. 4. <sup>c</sup> Job viii. 13. xxvii. 8. <sup>f</sup> Phil. iii. 19. <sup>e</sup> Matt. vi. 21.

be, but he must be *an Enemy of GOD*<sup>h</sup>. If indeed you were dead to the World, and your Life hid with Christ in GOD, you would set your Affections on Things above, & chuse Things which are there, where Christ sitteth on the Right Hand of GOD<sup>i</sup>: But the Want of this Temper shews, that you are carnally minded, which it is Death to be<sup>k</sup>; and that the redeeming Love of Christ has never exerted its Influence upon your Souls, nor his Cross had any due Efficacy upon you; for if it had been so, the World would have been crucified to you, and you to the World<sup>l</sup>.

7. THE Soul “ that does not long for  
“ greater Improvements in the Divine  
“ Life,” is still a Stranger to the Five  
Principles of it.

You know, that we are called, as Christians, with an high and holy Calling<sup>m</sup>; and as he that is the Author of this Calling, is holy, so are we to be holy in all manner of Conversation<sup>n</sup>, and to be perfect, even as our Father which is in Heaven is perfect<sup>o</sup>. Here will therefore be Room for Improvement, not only during our Continuance in the present Life, but through all the Ages of a glorious

<sup>h</sup> Jam. iv. 4.      <sup>i</sup> Col. iii. 1, 2, 3.      <sup>k</sup> Rom. viii.  
6.      <sup>l</sup> Gal. vi. 14.      <sup>m</sup> Phil. iii. 14.      <sup>o</sup> 2 Tim. i. 9.  
<sup>n</sup> 1 Pet. i. 15.      <sup>o</sup> Matt. xv. 48.

glorious Eternity ; and it is the ardent Desire of every Good Man, that in this Sense ~~above all others,~~ his Path may be like the ~~shining~~ Light, that shineth more and more, until the perfect Day<sup>P</sup>. And this is the one Thing that he does, or that in which all his Labours centre ; being conscious to himself how far he is from having already attained, or being already perfect, forgetting the Things that are behind, he reaches forth unto those Things that are before, and presses toward the Mark, for the Prize of the high Calling of GOD in Christ Jesus<sup>q</sup>. In this View he seriously considers the Circumstances of Life in which Providence has placed him ; that he may observe the Advantages, which these Circumstances give him for Religious Improvements ; and it is delightful to him to discover such Advantages.

Now if there be any of you, who know nothing of this Temper, you are certainly in an *Unregenerate State* : For none can be born of GOD, that do not love him ; and none can truly love him, that does not earnestly desire, more and more to resemble him. So that if your Hearts can indulge such a Thought as this, “ I wish I knew how much Religion would be just sufficient to save me, and I would go so far, and stop there ; ” your Conscience must tell you, that

<sup>P</sup> Prov. iv. 18. • <sup>q</sup> Phil. iii. 12,—14.

that you secretly hate Religion, and are unwillingly drag'd toward the Form of it, by an unnatural and external Violence, ~~the Fear~~<sup>of</sup> Misery and Ruin in neglecting it; and that you are not act'd by the free and liberal Principle of a Nature savingly renewed.'

8. The Soul " that does not know what it is, to live by Faith in Christ, and in Dependance on his Spirit," is still in an *Unregenerate State*.

WE are all the Children of GOD, by Faith in Christ Jesus<sup>r</sup>, if indeed we are so at all; and he that is joined to the Lord, in this Sense, is one Spirit with him<sup>s</sup>. But if any Man have not the Spirit of Christ, ~~he~~<sup>t</sup> is none of his<sup>u</sup>; for as GOD has predestinated us to the Adoption of Children, by Jesus Christ<sup>v</sup>, to himself<sup>w</sup>, so of his Fulness<sup>x</sup> tis that all Believers do receive, even Grace for Grace<sup>y</sup>, or an Abundance and Variety of Grace, by Virtue of their Union with him, who is the Head; from whom the whole Body, being fitly joined together, and strengthened by what every Joint supplies, by an Energy proportionable to every Part, increases to the edifying of itself in Love<sup>z</sup>. These Things, as you see, are not only hinted in Scripture, but are copiously insisted<sup>aa</sup>.

<sup>r</sup> Gal. iii. 26. <sup>s</sup> 1 Cor. vi. 17. <sup>t</sup> Rom. viii. 9.  
<sup>a</sup> Ephes. i. 5. <sup>w</sup> John i. 16. • <sup>z</sup> Ephes. iv. 15, 16.

S E R . I . as regard not Christ and the Spirit. 27

insisted upon, as very material Points : And tho' I readily acknowledge, Good Men may apprehend, and consider them very differently, and may express those Apprehensions in different Phrases ; yet as Experience makes it plain, that those Souls generally flourish most, who have the most distinct Conceptions of them, and the most habitual Regard to them ; so I think it is plain from these Scriptures, that there can be no true Religion at all, where there is a total Insensibility of them. If therefore there are any of you, that apprehend it is *Enthusiasm* to talk of the *Affistances of the Spirit* ; nay, I will add, if there are any of you, that do not earnestly desire these *Affistances*, and do not seek them daily from the Hand of *Christ*, as the great *Covenant-Head* of his People ; you are, I fear, Strangers to some of the *First Principles of the Oracles of GOD*<sup>y</sup>, and are *sensual*, not having the *Spirit*<sup>z</sup>. And tho' you may now and then form a hasty, and perhaps a warm Resolution in Religion, you will quickly, with the proud *Youths*, that are conceited of their own Sufficiency, faint and be weary, and with the *Young Men* you will utterly fail ; while they only that wait upon the *LORD*, shall renew their Strength, shall mount up as on *Eagles Wings*, and pressing on with an unwearied Pace, according to the different

<sup>y</sup> Heb. v. 12.

<sup>z</sup> Jude, ver. 19.

28 *The Spirit must be thirsted after.* SER. I.  
different Degrees of Vigour which the different Parts of their Course may require, shall run and not be weary, and shall walk and not faint <sup>a</sup>. In short, if you do not thirst after the Water of Life, that is, (as the Evangelist himself explains it,) the Spirit, which they that believe on Christ shall receive <sup>b</sup>, however bountiful he is, he makes no Promise to impart it to you; and if you never receive it, all your other Sources of Comfort will soon be dried up, and the miserable Condition of the Creature, that asked in vain for one Drop of Water to cool his tormented Tongue <sup>c</sup>, will certainly be yours.

HERE I apprehend Multitudes will mis-  
carry, who have made a fair Show in the Eyes of Men; and if you are condemned by this Mark, I am sure you will not be acquitted by any of the preceding. For all the Branches of an holy Temper have such a Connection with this, and such a Dependance upon it, that a Man who is destitute of this, can have only the Semblance of the rest.

AND thus, Sirs, I have with all Plainness and Faithfulness, as in the Sight of God, and sensible of my Account to him,  
laid <sup>c</sup>.

<sup>a</sup> Isa. xl. 30, 31.      <sup>b</sup> John vii. 39.      <sup>c</sup> Luke xvi. 24.

SER. I. *Baptism is not Regeneration.* 29

laid before you a Variety of Hints, by which I think you may safely and truly judge, whether you be, or be not, in an *Unregenerate State*: And I shall now beg Leave to conclude my Discourse with one plain *Inference* from the Whole, *viz.*

- THAT *Baptism* is not *Regeneration*, in the Scriptural, and most important Sense of the Word.

To prove this as a *Corollary* from the preceding Discourse, I shall only assume this most reasonable Concession, with which you may remember I at first set out; "that *Regeneration*, and *being born of GOD*, signify the same Thing." Now I have shewn you from a Variety of *Scriptures* under the former Heads, that *every one* whom the "Sacred Oracles represent as *born of GOD*, receiveth *Christ*, overcometh the *World*, and falleth not. But it is too plain, that *these Characters* do not agree to *every one* that is *baptized*; and consequently it evidently follows, that *every one* who is *baptized* is not of Course *born of GOD*, or *Regenerate*; and therefore, that *Baptism* is not *Scripture-Regeneration*.

I THINK no Mathematical Demonstration plainer, and more certain than this Conclusion; and therefore, whatever great and ancient

cient Names may be urged on the other Side of the Question, I shall rest the Matter here, without leading you into the Niceties of a Controversy so easily decided. I would only farther observe, that they who most vigorously contend for the other *Manner of speaking* (for after all it is but a Dispute about a Word,) acknowledge expressly, that a Man may be saved without what they call *Regeneration*, and that he may perish with it. And tho' Persons are taught to speak of their State, in Consequence of *Baptism*, in very high, and I fear, dangerous Terms; yet when wise and good Men come to explain those Terms, it evidently appears, that many of whom they are used, are so in a State of Salvation as to be daily obnoxious to Damnation; so the *Children of GOD*, as also to be the *Children of the Devil*; and so *Inheritors of the Kingdom of Heaven*, as to be *Children of Wrath*, and on the Brink of Hell.

WHERE Persons of real Piety apprehend themselves under a *Necessity* of using such Phrases with Respect to all that are *baptized*, we cannot blame them for endeavouring to bring down their Signification, as low as possible: But they will, I hope, excuse those who chuse to speak, in what they apprehend to be a more Scriptural, Rational, and Edifying Language.

IT

IT was Matter of Conscience with me, to state the Matter, as you have heard. I do therefore earnestly intreat you, my dear Beloved, in the Name of our *Lord Jesus Christ*, and for the Sake of your own immortal Souls, that you *deceive not yourselves with vain Words*; but that where your Eternal Salvation is so plainly concerned, you bring the Cause, the important Cause, to an immediate Trial: And if you are convinced, as I suppose many of you quickly may be, that you are at present *dead in Trespasses and Sins*, then let me beseech you, to reflect on what the most transient Survey of the Scripture may teach you, as to the *Danger* of such a Case. For tho' it will be my Busines, in the Proces of these Discourses, more largely to represent it, when I come to speak of *the Necessity of the New Birth*, God only knows, whether your Lives may be continued, till we advance so far in the Subject: And where a Case of this Kind is in question, the Delay of a Week, or even of a Day, may be inevitable and eternal Ruin.



## S E R M O N . II.

Of the NATURE of REGENERATION, and particularly of the CHANGE it produces in Mens Apprehensions.

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2 COR. V. 17.

*If any Man be in Christ, he is a new Creature: Old Things are passed away, behold, all Things are become New.*

THE Knowledge of our true State in Religion, is at once a Matter of so great Importance, and so great Difficulty, that in Order to obtain it, it is necessary we should have *Line upon Line*, and *Precept upon Precept*. The plain Discourse which you heard last Lord's-Day, was intended to lead you into it; and I question not, but I then said enough to convince many, that they

they were in an *Unregenerate* Condition. Nevertheless as there are various Approaches towards *Regeneration* and *Conversion*, which on the whole fall short of it; I think it very expedient now to give you, what I may properly enough call the Counter-part of this View; which I shall, by Divine Assistance, attempt from the Words I have now been reading.

THE Apostle who wrote them, was transported to such a Zeal for *Christ*, and for the Souls of Men, that some thought him *beside himself*<sup>a</sup>; and no doubt many would represent him, as the greatest Enthusiast upon the Face of the Earth. But as it was a *very small Thing to him to be judged of Man's Judgment*<sup>b</sup>, he calmly vindicates himself, by declaring that there was a *Cause* for all this. Warmth, as the Honour of God and the Redeemer, and the Eternal Salvation of Men, were so intimately concerned in the Affair: *The Love of Christ*, says he, *constrains us*<sup>c</sup>, or (as the Word \* properly signifies,) *it bears us away with it*, like a mighty Torrent, which we are not able to resist; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead, under the Sentence of God's righteous Law, or they would not have needed such an Attone-

<sup>a</sup> Ver. 15.<sup>b</sup> 1 Cor. iv. 3.<sup>c</sup> 2 Cor. v. 14.

\* Συρχει.

34           *If any Man be in Christ, SER. 2.*  
ment as the Blood of his Son ; and we farther judge, that he died for all, that they who now live, only in Consequence of his dying Love, *should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him that died for them*<sup>a</sup>. We therefore live to this Jesus ; we consecrate our Lives and Labours to this Purpose ; and in Consequence of it, *we henceforth know no Man after the Flesh*, that is, we do not regard our Temporal Interests, nor consider how we may most effectually obtain the Favour and Friendship of those who may be useful to us in Life ; yea, though we have known Christ after the Flesh, or have expected a Temporal Messiah, who should make our Nation triumphant over the Gentiles, and enrich it with the Spoils of other Nations, yet now henceforth we know him no more under such a Character<sup>b</sup>. And in this Respect the same Temper will prevail in the Heart of every real Christian ; and therefore, i. e. in Consequence of what was said before of the Redeemer's Love, *if any Man be in Christ*, if he be really one of his faithful Servants, united to him by a lively Faith, and in Consequence of that Union interested in his Salvation, *he is a New Creature* ; his Views and Sentiments, his Affections and Pursuits, are so entirely changed, that it seems, as it were, to be come *into a New World*,

<sup>a</sup> 2 Cor. v. 15.

<sup>b</sup> Ver. 16.

*World*, and to be transformed quite into another Person from what he formerly was : *Old Things are passed away*, and (*behold the astonishing Transformation,*) *all Things are become New.* This is the Thought, that I am now to illustrate ; and you cannot but see, how proper a Foundation it will be for our Discourse on the *Second Generation* proposed, which is,

SECONDLY, Particularly to describe the *Nature* of that great *Change*, which passes on every Soul, that is truly *Regenerate*, in the Scriptural, and most important Sense of the Word †.

AND here it may hardly seem necessary to tell you, that I do not mean to assert, that the Substance of the Soul, and its Natural Faculties, are in a strict and proper Sense *changed* : A Man might as reasonably assert from such a Scripture, that the former Body was annihilated, and a New one

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pro-

† Some chuse to call the *Change* here described, *Renovation*, rather than *Regeneration*. I have given my Reasons before, (pag. 1b, 29.) why I use the Words *promiscuously* : But I shall endeavour through the whole of these Discourses, so to state the *Nature* of this *Change*, as to have no Controversy with Good Men of any Persuasion about any Thing but the *Name* of it ; concerning which, I hope they will not contend with me, as I am sure I will not quarrel with them.

produced ; and common Sense and Decency will not allow us to imagine, that the *Apostle* meant any Thing of this Nature, by the General Terms he uses here. But the plain Meaning is, that when a Man becomes a real *Christian*, the whole Temper and Character of his Mind is so *changed*, as to become *different* from that of the Generality of Mankind, and *different* from what it formerly was, while in an unenlighten'd and unrenewed State. It is not merely a little circumstantial Alteration ; it is not assuming a New Name, professing New Speculative Opinions, or practising some New Rites and Forms : But it is becoming, (as we frequently say in our usual Forms of Speech,) *a different Creature, or a New Man.*—And thus the Sacred Writers express themselves in many other Passages, which very happily serve to illustrate this. They, in particular, represent *GOD* as promising, with relation to this Work, <sup>f</sup> *A New Heart will I give them, and a New Spirit will I put within them ; and I will take away the Heart of Stone, the stubborn, obstinate, impenetrable Disposition they once had, and will give them an Heart of Flesh, a tender, compliant Temper, which shall incline them to submit to my Will with Humility, and to obey it with Delight.* And thus, when the *Apostle* had

<sup>f</sup> *Ezek. xxxvi. 26.*

had exhorted the *Ephesians*<sup>g</sup>, to put off, with respect to their former Conversation, the Old Man, which is corrupt according to its deceitful Lusts; he adds, *And be renewed in the Spirit of your Mind, and put on the New Man*; which after GOD, or in Conformity to his Image, is created in Righteousness and true Holiness: Which is further illustrated by his important Exhortation to the *Romans*<sup>h</sup>, *Be not conformed to this World; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your Mind.* And on the same Principles, what in one Place he calls the *New Creature*<sup>i</sup>, in another parallel Place he expresses, by *Faith that works by Love*<sup>k</sup>, and by *keeping the Commandments of GOD*<sup>l</sup>; for all these, as equivalent Characters, he opposes to *Circumcision and Uncircumcision*, or to the mere Externals of a Religious Profession; declaring the utter Insufficiency of the latter, and the absolute Necessity of the former.

THE general Nature of this *Change* may then be understood, by an attentive Consideration of such *Scriptures* as those mentioned above; which indeed contain what is most essential on this Subject. But for the more compleat Illustration of the Matter, I shall particularly shew you, that where there is Reason to speak of a Man, as one

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<sup>g</sup> Ephes. iv. 22,—24.    <sup>h</sup> Rom. xii. 2.    <sup>i</sup> Gal. vi. 15.    <sup>k</sup> Gal. v. 6.    <sup>l</sup> 1 Cor. vii. 19.

of those who are *in Christ Jesus*, or who are truly *Regenerate*, there will be “ New Apprehensions, New Affections, New Resolutions, New Labours, New Enjoyments, and New Hopes ;” and perhaps those are few important Branches of the *Christian Character*, which may not be introduced, as illustrating one or other of these Remarks.

THE former of them is indeed the Foundation of the rest ; because as Religion is *a reasonable Service*, all the *Change* which is made in the *Affections* and *Resolutions*, in the *Pursuits*, *Enjoyments*, and *Hopes* of a Good Man, arises from that *different View*, in which he is now taught to look on those Objects, the Nature of which is to direct his Choice, to determine his Conduct, and regulate his Passions : It will therefore be the Business of this Evening’s Discourse to shew you,

I. THAT, wherever there is a real Principle of *Regeneration*, there will be *New APPREHENSIONS* of Things.

WHEN GOD created the Natural World, he said, in the very beginning of his Work, *Let there be Light, and there was Light*<sup>m</sup> : And thus he deals in this *New Creation*, which raises the Soul from a *Chaos*, to such a beauti-

<sup>m</sup> Gen. i. 3.

beautiful, well-ordered, and well-furnished Frame. *GOD*, says the Apostle, who commanded the Light to shine out of Darkness, has shined into our Hearts, to give the Light of the Knowledge of the Glory of *GOD*, in the Face of Jesus Christ<sup>n</sup>; whereas before, the Understanding was darkened, being alienated from the Life of *GOD*, through the Ignorance that was in them, because of the Blindness or Perverseness of their Hearts<sup>o</sup>.

Now this Illumination, of which I am speaking, does not so much refer to a Speculative, as to a Practical and Heart-impressing Knowledge. It is true, that when a Man once comes to be in good Earnest in Religion, he generally arrives at a clearer and fuller Knowledge even of the Doctrines of Christianity, than he had before: For he then sets himself to enquire with greater Diligence, and to seek Light of the great Father of Lights with greater Earnestness; he gets clear of many Evil Affections, that put a corrupt Bias upon his Judgment; and he comes within the Reach of those Promises, *Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord*<sup>r</sup>; and if any Man will do his Will, *he shall know of the Doctrine, whether it be of GOD*<sup>s</sup>. Yet I think, I may very properly say, that at various Times, when our Judg-

2 Cor. iv. 6.

<sup>o</sup> Ephes. iv. 18.

Hof. vi. 3.

John vii. 17.

ment of any Object is, the same, our *Apprehensions* of it are very different. It is one Thing, for instance, to believe that GOD is the Omnipotent, All-wise, and All-gracious Governor of the World ; and another, and very different Thing, to have the Heart powerfully impressed with an *Apprehension* of his Ability and Readiness to help us. I will therefore a little more particularly illustrate those Respects, in which the *Apprehensions* of such as are really *Regenerate*, differ from those which they formerly had : And I hope you will do yourselves the Justice to reflect, as we go along, how far you have ever felt *those Apprehensions* which you hear me describe ; and I have a pleasing Persuasion, that many of you have felt them, in a much livelier Manner than they can be described. I would observe then to you, that a *Regenerate* Soul has *New Apprehensions* “ of GOD, — of itself, — of Christ, — of Eternity, — and of the Way and Method that GOD has marked out for its being happy there.”

1. A *Regenerate* Soul has *New Apprehensions* “ of the blessed GOD.”

THERE are very few, who pretend so much as to *doubt* of the *Being* of a GOD, and fewer yet, that will venture to *deny* it : And

And even among those, who have denied it, and disputed against it, some, by their own Confession, have felt their Hearts give them the Lie, and upbraid them for using the Powers of Reason and Speech, against the Giver and Preserver of both. I persuade myself at least, there are none that hear me this Day, who would not look upon a professed *Atheist* as a Monster, unworthy to be a Member of Human Society, and little to be trusted in any of its Relations. Yet after all, while the *Being* of the blessed God is warmly asserted, his *Nature* is so little understood and considered, that there are Thousands who may still properly be said, to be *without GOD in the World*<sup>t</sup>, or in Practice and Temper, tho' not in Notion, to be *Atheists* in it. Wicked Men therefore in general are described, as those that *know not GOD*<sup>t</sup>: But where God has determined to glorify his Mercy in the Salvation of a Sinner, he *shines into the Heart* for this blessed Purpose, to give the *Light of the Knowledge of the Glory of GOD*<sup>t</sup>. And thus the Glories of the Divine Being are known to the *Regenerate Soul* in such a Manner, as they are not to the most acute Metaphysician, or the sublimest Philosopher, who is himself a Stranger to the Spiritual Life.

THE

THE Person of whom we now speak, has *New Apprehensions*, "of the *Spirituality* and *Omnipresence* of GOD,—of his *Majesty* and *Purity*, — of his *Power* and *Patience*,—of his *Goodness*,—and his *intimate Access* to Men's *Spirits*, with the Reality and Importance of his *Operations* upon them." — Permit me a little to represent the *Views* of each, both to direct your Enquiries, and also to impress your Minds; and my own, with Truths in which we have all so intimate a Concern.

THE Divine *Spirituality* and *Omnipresence* is apprehended by the Good Man in a peculiar Manner. That there is some *Immaterial Substance*, and that *Matter* is moved by his Active Power continually impress'd upon it, according to stated Laws, is indeed so plain a Dictate of Reason, that I question not, but the Thought influences the Minds of some, who have not so much Acquaintance with Language, as to be able properly to express it: But alas, it easily passes thro', as if no way important. It is quite a different Thing, to *feel*, as it were, the Presence of an infinitely Intelligent, and All-observing Deity, actually surrounding us in all Times and Places;—to say from the Heart, *Oh Lord, thou hast searched me, and known me, so that thou understandest my*

*T*houghs afar off: Whither shall I go from thy Spirit, or whither shall I flee from thy Presence? Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine Hand upon me<sup>u</sup>; — to feel, as it were, 'the Hand of GOD, which indeed we may feel, if we duly attend to it, in all the Impressions made on our Bodily Senses, and on the Powers of our Mind; — to feel our selves even now supported by it, and to argue from the constant Support of of his *Hand*, the never failing Notice of his Eye. "He reads my present Thoughts; he knows, even now, all the Secrets of my Soul, and has always known them; has always observed my Conduct in every the minutest Particular, and recorded, in permanent Characters, the whole History of my Life, and of my Heart; of this de-praved sinful Life, of this vain, this treacherous, this rebellious Heart."

WITH this Conception of the Divine Observance are closely and intimately connected *New Apprehensions* of the *Purity of GOD*, and of his infinite *Majesty*; Views, which mutually assist, and illustrate each other. The Irreverence with which the Generality of Men behave in the Presence of God, and the Easiness with which they admit the slightest Temptation to sin against

<sup>u</sup> Psal. cxxxix, 1, —7

44      *New Apprehensions of his.*    SER. 2.

gainst him, plainly shew what low No-  
tions they have of him: But GOD does, as  
it were, appear to the Eye of a Renewed  
Mind, array'd in his Robes of ~~Light~~<sup>Right</sup> and  
Majesty; so that he is ready to cry ~~out~~.

" *I have heard of thee by the hearing of the  
Ear, but now mine Eye seeth thee*<sup>w</sup>: I see  
the Eternal, Self-existent, Self-sufficient  
God, who sits upon the Circle of the  
Earth, and the Inhabitants thereof are as  
Grashoppers; who spreadeth out the Hea-  
vens as a Tent to dwell in, and looks  
down on the Nations as the Drop of a  
Bucket, and counts them as the small Dust  
of the Balance<sup>x</sup>: Who would not fear be-  
fore him? who would not tremble at his  
Presence<sup>y</sup>? who would not revere that  
GOD, who is purer Eyes than to behold  
Evil, and cannot look upon Iniquity<sup>z</sup>; who  
cannot be tempted with Evil<sup>a</sup>, but must  
see it, and hate it, even in all its Forms."

AND such too are the *Views* its has of his  
*Almighty Power*, that the enlightened Mind  
will further add, " A God of Almighty  
Power, who could speak a whole World  
into Ruin; (undoubtedly he could, for  
he spoke it into Existence;) who by one-  
" single

<sup>w</sup> Job xlvi. 5.    <sup>x</sup> Isa. xl. 15, 22.    <sup>y</sup> Jer. v. 22. <sup>z</sup>  
<sup>a</sup> Hab. i. 13.    <sup>a</sup> Jam. i. 13.

SER. 2. *Purity, Power, and Patience.* 45

“ single Thought, “ by one silent Volition,  
“ could easily abase the proudest Creature  
“ in the Universe; must have it in his  
“ ~~Power~~ to bring me in a Moment to the  
“ ~~Dust of Death~~, and to the Flames of Hell;  
“ to lay me as low in Misery, and to hold  
“ me as long in it, as he should please:  
“ This, O my Soul, this is the *GOD*, a-  
“ gainst whom such feeble Worms as we  
“ are daily offending, and whom we madly  
“ presume to make our Enemy.”

THIS gives the *Regenerate Man* a further Sense of the *Patience of GOD*, than ever he had before. Others may look round upon the World, and wonder there is so much *penal Evil* in it; but the Renewed Soul wonders, there is not a thousand times more. When he sees, how *the World lieth in Wickedness*<sup>b</sup>; when he observes, how poor impotent Mortals are, many of them perhaps, in Words blaspheming the *GOD of Heaven*; many more of them, most presumptuously violating all the plainest, and most important Precepts of his Law; and most of the rest, living in a perpetual Forgetfulness of him, as if he were not at all, & were not so considerable as to be any way worth their Notice; such an one cannot but wonder, that the Almighty Majesty of Heaven

<sup>b</sup> 1 John v. 19.

46 *New Apprehensions of his Goodness*, SER. 2.  
ven does not in a Moment make himself known by the *Thunder of his Power*, and confound all their Madness and Folly, by crushing the World with its Inhabitants into Ruin. He often sees the *rising Sun*, and the *descending Rain*, with Astonishment that it should be sent down on such a World as ours.

HE has also more affecting *Views* than ever of the *Divine Goodness*. Most Men speculatively believe it ; and they take occasion, even from that Belief, to affront it : But a Good Man views it at once as a delightful, and a venerable Thing : He fears the *Lord, and his Goodness* ; and while it encourages him, guilty as he is, to repose himself upon it as his Hope, it awakens a generous Kind of Confusion at the Thought of ever having offended him, and fills his very Soul with Indignation at the Thought of repeating such Offences.

AND once more, The Regenerate Man has quite different *Notions* than before, of the *intimate Access which GOD has to the Spirit: of Men*, and his important *Power of operating upon them*. The greatest Part of Men indeed consider not, as they ought, how the whole *Material World* perpetually depends upon

\* Hos. iii. 5.

SER. 2. and Access to the Spirits of Men. '47  
upon a Divine Agency, and is no other than one grand Machine, on which the great Artificer continually acts, to make it an Instrument of Mercy to his Sensitive and Intelligent Creatures. But there are yet fewer, who seriously consider, how entirely the Hearts of Men are in the Hand of the Lord, and how much depends on his Influences upon them. Nevertheless Experience teaches the Renewed Soul, that he is the GOD of the Spirits of all Flesh<sup>a</sup>, and that he not only views, but manages them as he pleases. "Lord," does he say, "this Spirit of mine is shaded with thick Darkness, but thou canst illuminare it; it is diseased, but thou canst cure it; it is unstable as Water<sup>b</sup>, and lighter than a Feather, yet thou canst fix and establish it; and whatever thou wouldest have me to be, and to do, for thy Glory, and mine own Happiness, thou canst work in me to both to will and to perform it<sup>c</sup>: So that all I need, to the Rectitude and Felicity of my Nature, is only this, that I may have more of thine inward, vital, operative Presence." It is not easy to conceive, what Efficacy this Thought has, for the Transformation of the Soul. But again,

2. NEW

<sup>a</sup> Numb. xxvii. 16. <sup>b</sup> Gen. xl ix. 4. <sup>c</sup> Phil. ii. 13.

2. NEW Apprehensions are connected with these Sentiments in the Regenerate Soul, " concerning itself, and its own State."

"Tis surprizing to think, how many run through successive Years in Life, without ever turning the Eye of the Mind inward, that the Soul may survey itself. I speak not of a *Philosophical Survey* of the Faculties of the Mind ; which, tho' indeed in its Place it be useful and entertaining, is no more necessary in its Refinements to a well order'd State, than Skill in *Anatomy* is to a healthful Constitution : But I speak of those *Views of the Mind*, which are in the Reach of all, how low soever their Genius, or their Education may have been.

As all true Happiness is an Internal Thing, where-ever God intends to produce it in the Heart of a revolted corrupted Creature, (and such alas, we all naturally are,) he leads it into a *View of itself*; and shews it, (if I may be allowed the Expression,) a Mixture of *Grandeur*, and *Misery*, that lies within ; which yet the greatest Part of Mankind live and die without ever observing. "I am here," does the awaken'd Creature say, "an Intelligent Being ; far superiour to "this well-wrought Frame of Flesh and "Blood,

" Blood, which GOD has given me for a  
 " little while to command, and which I  
 " must quickly drop in the Dust: I am  
 " made capable of determining my own  
 " Choice, of directing my own Actions, of  
 " judging concerning the Importance of  
 " Ends, and the Propriety of Means in Sub-  
 " serviency to them: And while I see a  
 " vast Variety of Creatures in different  
 " Forms beneath me, I see no Rank of  
 " Creatures above me, nothing nobler than  
 " *Man*, here on Earth where I dwell. Yet  
 " I see *Man*, in the midst of his Glory, a  
 " feeble dependent mortal Creature, who can-  
 " not possibly be his own End, nor can of  
 " himself alone, by any Means command or  
 " insure his own Happiness.—Every thing  
 " tells me, that he is *the Creature of GOD*;  
 " and that it his greatest Honour and Felici-  
 " ty, to know, and practically to acknow-  
 " ledge himself to be so: Every thing tells  
 " me, that it is most reasonable, that *GOD*,  
 " who is the great *Original of Man*, should  
 " also be *the End of his Being*: But have I  
 " made him *the End of mine?* My Soul,  
 " thou art conscious to thyself, thou hast  
 " lived in many Instances *without him in the*  
 " *World*.—He has given thee, even in the  
 " System of thine own Nature, and of the  
 " visible Beings that are round about thee,

\* Eph. ii. 12.

“ compared with his Providential Interposition in the Management of them, the “ *Intimations of his holy and righteous Will:* “ He has expressed *these Dictates* far more “ plainly in his *written Word*: And when “ thou comest to examine them, how art “ thou condemned by them? When thou “ comest to think of the *Spirituality* and “ *Purity* of his *Being*, and his *Law*, how “ shameful does thy *Temper*, and thy *Life*, “ appear to have been? what an infinite “ Disproportion is there between that, and its “ perfect Rule! — And whom, oh my Soul, “ hast thou offended? whose *Law* hast thou “ broken? whose *Grace* hast thou “ despised? The *Law*, the *Grace*, of that “ Eternal *GOD*, of whom I have now been “ hearing; who is here *present with me*, who “ is even *within me*, and who *sees*, oh my “ Heart, (more distinctly than thou canst “ see,) *all thy Guilt*, and all its Aggravations. Oh Lord, *I abhor my self*, and “ *repent in Dust and Ashes*<sup>h</sup>. — I have talked “ of *Sin*, and of the *Sentence of GOD* “ against it, as a Thing of Course: But oh “ my Soul, it is thine own Concern! The “ *Guilt*, the *Stain of Sin* is still upon thee; “ the *Sentence of GOD* is pronounced “ against thee; and it must be *reversed*, or “ thou art undone for ever. These irregular

“ *Lat Habits* and *Dispositions* that prevail in  
“ thee, must be *corrected*, or they will  
prove thy Mortal Disease, and Everlast-  
ing Torment.—Thou art *a poor weak*  
“ *irresolute Creature*: The Experience of  
“ every past Day of Life, since I began to  
“ think of Religion at all, proves it: Yet  
“ thou must, by some Means or other, at-  
“ tain to *Inward Strength* and *Inward Pu-*  
“ *rity*, or thou art lost; and all these great  
“ *Capacities*, and glorious *Faculties*, will but  
“ make thy Ruin so much the more “di-  
“ stinguished. Oh how weighty the Care!  
“ oh How great the Charge! What shall I  
“ do, that *Thought*, that *Reason*, that *Im-*  
“ *mortality*, may not be my Destruction?  
“ Where shall I find *a Rock*, that will be  
“ firm enough for my Support and Safety?  
“ where shall I find the *Means*, to build the  
“ *Fabrick* of such a *Happiness*, as thine, oh  
“ my Soul, must be, if ever I am happy  
“ at all?”

Thus does GOD teach the Mind, by its Inward Reviews and Reflections, this important Lesson of its own Impotence and Guilt, of its Depravity and Ruin ; and so prepares it for those *New Apprehensions of Christ*, which I mentioned as the *Third Particular*.

3. THE Regenerate Soul has *New Ap-*  
*prehensions* "concerning the Lord Je-  
 "sus Christ, considered as a *Mediator*  
 "in general, and as such a particular  
 "Mediator as he is exhibited in the  
 "Word of God."

THAT affecting *View*, which the *Rege-*  
*nate Soul* has, of the *Majesty*, *Glory*, *Pow-*  
*er*, and *Purity* of the blessed *GOD*, "will  
 undoubtedly convince him, how unfit he is  
 in himself to appear before his awful Pre-  
 sence. He is ready to sink down" in the  
 Dust at the very Thought, and to say,  
 "Who is able to stand before such a great  
 "and holy *GOD*, as thou art<sup>i</sup>? If I were  
 "in all the Original Rectitude and Glory of  
 "my Nature, I could not do it: How  
 "much less, surrounded as I am, with so  
 "much Guilt, with so much Pollution!  
 "I need, as it were, a *Days-Man* betwixt  
 "us, who might lay his Hand upon us both<sup>k</sup>,  
 "who should transact Affairs in my Name  
 "with *God*, and bring the peaceful Mes-  
 "sages of *God* to me: Let such an one  
 "speak with me, and I will bear; but let  
 "not *GOD* speak with me, lest I die<sup>l</sup>!"

AND when he comes to take a more near  
 and intimate *View* of this *Mediator* which  
*God*

<sup>i</sup> *I Sam.* vi. 20. <sup>k</sup> *Job ix.* 33. <sup>l</sup> *Exod.* xx. 19.

God has exhibited in the Gospel; the Renewed Soul is even charmed and transported with the *View*: And that JESUS, whose Name, he before pronounced with so much Coldness, -that the very Mention of it was a Kind of Profanation, now is regarded by him as *the chiefest among ten thousand<sup>m</sup>*, He beholds his Glory, as that of *the only-begotten of the Father, full of Grace and Truth<sup>n</sup>*. The Union of the Divine and Human Nature in the Person of Christ, though it appears indeed a *Mystery*, which he cannot fully explain, is nevertheless a glorious *Certainty*, which in the general he most cordially believes. He sees Emmanuel, GOD dwelling with us in Human Flesh, and acquiesces in the Sight; while the Rays of Divine Glory are tempered by passing through the *Vail, that is to say, his Flesh<sup>o</sup>*. He considers Christ, as made of GOD unto him *Wisdom, and Righteousness, and Sanctification, and Redemption<sup>p</sup>*: And each of these Views rejoices him to the very Heart. “ *Ignorant as I am, I shall be taught and instructed by him, that great Prophet whom God sent into the World; by him, who is Incarnate Wisdom, as well as Incarnate Love; whose Words resound in the Gospel, and whose Spirit seals the Instructions of his Word.* ”

E 3      “ *Guilty*

<sup>m</sup> Cant. v. 10.      <sup>n</sup> John i. 14.      <sup>o</sup> Heb. x.  
• 20.      <sup>p</sup> 1 Cor. i. 30.

54 *He has New Apprehensions* SER. 2,

“ Guilty as I am, my Crimes shall be ex-  
“ piated ; for there is *Redemption in his Blood*,  
“ even the *Forgiveness of Sins*<sup>9</sup> : There is  
“ an *Everlasting Righteousness*, that he has  
“ introduced ; and oh, how richly will it  
“ adorn my Soul ! — This *Pollution* of mine  
“ shall not for ever exclude me from a  
“ comfortable Intercourse with the pure  
“ Majesty of Heaven ; for *Christ* is come  
“ to be my *Sanctification* ; and he can  
“ cleanse me by his *Spirit*, and transform  
“ me into that Divine delightful Image  
“ which I have lost. — Victorious Lord,  
“ how easily canst thou *redeem me* from that  
“ State of Servitude, in which I have been  
“ kept so long complaining ? How easily,  
“ and how powerfully, canst thou vindicate  
“ me into the glorious *Liberty of the Children*  
“ of *GOD*<sup>10</sup> ! — Blessed *Jesus*, thou art my  
“ Light, and my Strength, my *Hope*, and  
“ my *Joy* ! Thou art just such a *Saviour*, as  
“ my Necessity requires ; thou fillest up all  
“ my Wants, and all my Wishes ; thou  
“ art *all in all* to me ! I would not be igno-  
“ rant of thee for ten thousand Worlds : I  
“ would not live a Day, nor an Hour,  
“ without recollecting, who, and what thou  
“ art, and maintaining that Intercourse with  
“ thee, which is the *Life of my Soul*.”

## 4. THE

4. THE Regenerate Soul has also ~~New~~  
 • *Apprehensions* " of the Importance of  
 " *Eternity*, when compared with  
~~Time~~ Time and all its Concerns."

"Tis indeed a most pityable Thing, and awakens our Astonishment, Grief, and Indignation, to observe how the *Things of this World* press down Immortal Spirits, and reduce them almost indeed to a State of Brutality. Most deplorable it is, to see the ~~Power and Energy~~ of those Motives, which are taken merely from *this Earth*, and its little Concernments; so that if a Man did but know what was the *favourite Vanity*, he might almost predict, from the Knowledge of Circumstances, how a Man's Actions would be order'd; and might almost be sure, that he would follow, whithersoever this *Interest*, or that *Pleasure*, this *ambitious*, or that *mercenary View* called him; though all the Prospects for an *Eternal World* pleaded the contrary Way. Such is the *Folly and Madness*, that is in Mens Hearts while they live; and after that they go down to the Dead, and spend that Immortal Duration, which they have despised, in fruitless Lamentations. Fatal Delusion! which it is the great Design of the Gospel to cure.

E 4

BUT

" Eccles. ix. 3.

BUT when a Soul becomes wise to Salvation, it is taught to look not at the Things which are seen, but at the Things which are not seen; because it has now a full Sense of what before it only notionally confessed; that the Things which are seen, are Temporal; but the Things which are not seen, are Eternal<sup>1</sup>.—ETERNITY! it is impossible I shd tell you, how much an Eye, that is enlighten'd by GOD, sees, and reads, as it were, in that one Word; while one Scene beyond another is still opening on the Mind, till its Sight, and its Thoughts are swallowed up<sup>2</sup>. And as the Creatures are as Nothing with respect to GOD, so all the Interests of Time, with respect to Eternity, appear as less than Nothing and Vanity<sup>3</sup>. To be made for an Everlasting Existence appears in so awful a View; that while it has some pleasing Hope, it rejoices with trembling; and every remaining Fear, with relation to this great Interest, seems a greater Evil, than the Certainty of any Temporal Calamity.

I might add upon this Head, That the Regenerate Soul has not only New Views of the Importance, but likewise of the Nature, of the Invisible and Eternal State; and particularly of the Nature of the Celestial Happiness. It does not consider it merely, or chiefly, as a State of Corporeal Enjoyment, formed

<sup>1</sup> 2 Cor. iv. 18.      <sup>2</sup> Isa. xl. 17.

formed to gratify and delight the Senses ; but as a State of perfect Conformity to GOD, and most endearing Intercourse with him ; of which as it begins already by Divine Grace to taste the Pleasures, so it most ardently thirsts after them ; and would be heartily willing to lose this Body for ever, and bid an Eternal Adieu to every Object capable of giving it Delight ; rather than it would consent to lose, in a perpetual Succession of such Objects, the Sight of the Father of Spirits, and that Sensibility of his Love, which adds the most substantial Solidity, and exalted Relish, to every inferior Good, that can be desired from it.

- 5. A Regenerate Man has also *New Apprehensions* “*of the Way* which GOD “*has marked out to this Happiness.*”

NOTHING is more common, than for carnal and ignorant Men to imagine, that it is a very easy thing to get to Heaven ; and upon this Presumption, they *bew out to themselves Cisterns, broken Cisterns that can hold no Water*<sup>w</sup> ; and often live and die with *a Lye in their Right-Hand*<sup>x</sup>. But the Renewed Soul, having such awful *Notions* of the blessed GOD, and such *Apprehensions* of the Excellency and Glory of the *Heavenly State*,

<sup>w</sup> Jer. iii. 13. • <sup>x</sup> Isa. xliv. 20.

State, as you have heard, deeply ~~feels~~ know absolutely necessary it is, that something of a very great and important *Change* should pass in the Mind of that sinful Creature, that ever hopes to be a Partaker of it. He sees, that 'tis impossible, any External Profession, or External Rite, should secure so great an End ; impossible, that *Baptism* should be *Regeneration*, in that Sense in which the Scripture uses the Word, or that by this alone, though ever so regularly administered, a Man's Eternal Happiness should be secured. He sees, that to be annexed to this or that *Party* of *Christians*, to join with *Established*, or with *Separate Churches*, and to be ever so zealous for their respective Order, Worship, and Discipline, is a Thing quite of foreign Consideration here ; and that the best, or the worst of Men, may be, and probably are, on one Side, and on another ; nay, that Ignorance, Pride, and Bigotry may take Occasion from hence, to render Men *farther from the Kingdom of GOD*, than any Mistake in Judgment, or Practice, on these disputed Points, could have set them.

No, my Brethren, when a Man's Eyes are enlightened by GOD's renewing *Spirit*, he sees, and feels, that in the Language of Scripture, he must be *created anew in Christ Jesus*.

Jesus sees, that *Holiness* is a Character without which no Man shall see the Lord; and he is perhaps little anxious, whether this, or the *Faith* that produces it, shall be called a *Condition*, or a *Qualification*, or an *Instrument*, while he sees he must perish without it: He sees, that as it is absolutely *necessary*, so it is very *extensive*, as the *Commandment* which is its Rule is exceeding broad<sup>a</sup>: He sees, that it must not only effectually regulate the *Actions* of his *Life*, but controul all the *Sentiments* of his *Heart*: Nay, he sees, it must not only be submitted to as a *necessary*, but be chosen as a most *amiable* Thing: And accordingly, he does *choose it as such*.—The *Unregenerate Soul*, when he hears of *Repentance* and *Reformation*, tho' he understands not half that it means, nor is aware of what will in Fact be the greatest Difficulty of it, looks upon it at best as a *nauseous Medicine*, which he must take, or die: But the *Regenerate Man* finds his *Heart* so wonderfully and so happily *changed*, that he regards it for itself, as the *Food*, the *Health*, and the *Life* of his *Soul*; as that which necessarily brings *its own Pleasures*, and in a considerable Degree *its own Reward* along with it; so that now, as *David* beautifully expresses it, *He openeth his Mouth, and panteth;*

*panteth; because he longs for God's commandments<sup>b</sup>.*

AND I will add once more, The Good Man is also made sensible of *the Place which Faith and Holiness hold*, in the Scheme which GOD has laid, for our *Justification* before him, and our *Acceptance* with him. I do not say, that *all Christians* conceive ~~of~~ this with equal Perspicuity, or express their Conceptions with equal Exactness: The most candid Allowance should here be made for the *different Ideas* they fix to the *same Phrases*, as they have been used to look upon them, with Veneration, or with Suspicion. But this I will venture to say, because I am persuaded the Scripture will bear me out in it, "that the *Confidence* of a *Regenerate Soul* "is not fixed on *his own Holiness*, or *Faith*, "as the *meritorious Cause* of his *Acceptance* "with *God*." He is deeply and cordially sensible, that *he is made accepted in the Beloved*<sup>c</sup>; and seeing nothing but Guilt, and Weakness, and Ruin *in himself*, he ascribes to the blessed *Jesus*, and to the Riches of *God's free Grace in him*, his Righteousness, his Strength, and his Salvation. And where a Man is thus persuaded, I think he must in Effect *believe*, even tho' he might scruple in Words expressly to own it, "that *Christ*, "as our great *Surety*, having perfectly obeyed

<sup>b</sup> Psal. cxix. 131.      <sup>c</sup> Eph. i. 6.

“ *the Law* of GOD himself, and by his  
“ Blood having fully *satisfied* the *Divine*  
“ *Justice*, for the Breach of it, we, *on our*  
“ *believing in him* by a vital Faith, are *justi-*  
“ *fied* before GOD by the *Imputation* of his  
“ *perfect Righteousness*. ” This latter Way  
of stating it, when rightly explained, appears  
just equivalent to the former ; and it is a  
Manner of conceiving and expressing it,  
which, when rightly understood, seems ex-  
tremely suitable to that deep *Humility*, and  
*Poverty of Spirit*, to which the Renewed  
Soul is brought, when, *like a new-born Babe,*  
*it desires the sincere Milk of the Word, that*  
*it may grow thereby* <sup>d</sup>. But as the Mind, at  
such a Time, finds little Inclination to con-  
tend about *Words* and *Phrases*, it would be  
much less proper for me, to enter into any  
Controversy about them here.

LET it suffice for the present, that I  
have given you this plain Representation of  
*that Change*, which is wrought in a Man’s  
*Apprehensions*, when he is made *a New Crea-*  
*ture*. When *Old Things are passed away*, he  
has *New Apprehensions* of *GOD*, of *himself*,  
of *Christ*, of *Eternity*, and of *the Way* to  
obtain the *Happiness* of it : And as at this  
happy Time *all things are become New*, there  
are

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are "New Affections, New Resolutions,  
New Labours, New Enjoyments, and  
" New Hopes," which are the Result of  
the *Change* already described. But it will be  
much more difficult to reduce what I have  
to offer on *these Heads*, within the Bounds  
of the *next Discourse*, than proper to at-  
tempt any of them in *this*. Go home, — my  
Friends, and try yourselves by what you  
have already heard; and be assured, that if  
you are *condemned* by this Part of the De-  
scription, it is impossible you should be *ap-  
proved* by any that will follow; ~~since~~ they  
have all their Foundation in *this*.



S E R-

## S E R M O N III.

Of the NATURE of REGENERA-  
TION, with respect to the  
CHANGE it produces in Mens  
Affections, Resolutions, Labours,  
Enjoyments, and Hopes.

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2 COR. v. 17.

*If any Man be in Christ, he is a  
New Creature : Old Things are  
passed away, behold, all Things are  
become New.*

A MONG the various Subjects, which exercise the Thoughts and Tongues of Men, few are more talked of than Religion. But it is melancholy to think, how little it is understood ; and how much it is mistaken, and misrepresented in the World. The Text before us gives us a very instructive View of it ; such a View, that I am sure, an

an Experimental Knowledge of its Sense would be infinitely preferable to the most critical and exact Knowledge of all the most curious Passages, both of the *Old Testament*, and the *New*. From it, you know, I have begun to describe that great *Change*, which the Word of *God* teaches us to represent under the Notion of *Regeneration*, or according to the Language of St. *Paul*, in this Passage of his Writings, by a *New Creation*. I know I am explaining it before many, who have been much longer acquainted with it than myself; and it becomes me to believe, before many, that ~~he~~ *we* attained to much higher Advances in it: But I fear also at the same Time, I speak of it before many, who are yet Strangers to it; and I am labouring, by the plainest Addresses that I can, to give them at least some just Ideas of it. Oh that to all the Descriptions, that either have, or shall be given, *God* may by his Grace add that Understanding, which arises from feeling correspondent Impressions on the Mind!

I HAVE already endeavoured to illustrate those *New Apprehensions*, which arise in the *Regenerate Mind*; *Apprehensions* of the blessed *GO D*, of *itself*, of *Christ*, of the *Eternal World*, and of the *Way* to obtain the *Happiness* of it. It now remains, that consider those “*New Affections, Resolutions, Labours,*

"Enjoyments, and Hopes," which result from them. I observe therefore,

II. THAT these New Apprehensions will be attended with New AFFECTIONS.

I READILY acknowledge, that the Degree, in which the *Affections* operate, may, and will be *different*, in different Persons, according to their Natural Constitution: But as in some Degree or another, they make an essential Part of our Frame, it is impossible but they must be impressed with a Matter of such infinite Importance, as *Religion* will appear. And the *Apprehensions* described above, must awaken the Exercise of correspondent *Affections*, and direct them to Objects very *different* from those, by which they were before excited, and on which they were fixed. And here now,

I. This may be especially illustrated in *Love*.

LOVE is indeed the *ruling Passion* of the Mind, and has all the rest in an avowed and real Subjection to it. And here lies the very Root of Human Misery, in our fallen and degenerate State: We are naturally *Lovers of ourselves* in a very irregular Degree; / *Lovers of Pleasures, more than Lovers of GOD*.

~~2 Tim. iii. 4.~~

F

But

But on the contrary, the first and great Commandment of the Law is written in the Breast of every Regenerate Man: *Thou shalt love the Lord thy GOD, with all thine Heart, and with all thy Soul, and with all thy Mind*<sup>b</sup>. It is true indeed, that if his Soul were perfectly delivered into this Mould, and his Attainments in *Divine Love* were compleat, there would be an End of all Sin, and almost of all Calamity too: For what Evil could assail or impress a Mind, entirely and unchangeably fixed upon *GOD*? Yet that the *Love of GOD* should be the *prevailing Affection*, is not merely a Circumstance, but an Essential Part of true Religion. While the Good Man sees him who is invisible<sup>c</sup>, ~~and infinitely~~ perfect in himself, and as the Author of Being and Happiness to the whole Creation, he cannot but acknowledge, that he is beyond Comparison the *most amiable* of all Objects. And tho' it is certain, that nothing can so much induce and inflame our *Love to GOD*, as a well-grounded Assurance, that he is become *our GOD*, and *our Father in Christ*; yet before the Regenerate Soul has attained to this, a Sense of those Favours which he receives from *GOD* in common with the whole Human Race, and more especially of those, which are inseparable from *a Christ-*

<sup>b</sup> Matt. xxii. 37, 38. • <sup>c</sup> Heb. xi. 27.

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• a Christian Profession, together with the Apprehension of his being accessible thro' a Mediator, and reconcilable to sinful Men, will diffuse some delightful Sense of GOD over the Mind, which will grow sweeter in Proportion to the Degree, in which his own Hopes brighten and settle, while they are growing toward the full Assurance of Faith.

AND as the real Christian loves him that begat, he loves him also that is begotten of him<sup>a</sup>. He loves the Lord Jesus Christ in Sincerity<sup>b</sup>, viewing him not in a cold and insensible Manner, as he once did, but with inflamed Affections, as the chiefest among ten thousand, and altogether lovely<sup>c</sup>. If he knows in what Degree the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ<sup>d</sup>, in becoming Incarnate for the Salvation of his People, in making himself a Sacrifice for their Sins, and paying his Life for the Ransom of their Lives; he feels himself drawn toward Jesus, thus lifted up on the Cross<sup>e</sup>; and the Love of Christ constrains him<sup>f</sup> to such a Degree, that he longs to find out some acceptable Method to express his inward and over-bearing Sense of it. How divided soever true Christians may be in other Respects, they all agree in this, in loving that Jesus whom they have not seen<sup>g</sup>.

F 2

WE

<sup>a</sup> 1 Joh. v. 1. <sup>b</sup> Eph. vi. 24. <sup>c</sup> Cant. v. 10, 16.  
<sup>d</sup> 2 Cor. viii. 9. <sup>e</sup> John xiii. 32. <sup>f</sup> 2 Cor. v. 14.  
<sup>g</sup> 1 Pet. i. 8.

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WE may further recollect on this *Heath*, that the *Apostle* in a solemn Manner adjures Christians by the *Love of the Spirit*<sup>1</sup>; thereby plainly implying, that such a *Love to him* is an important Branch of their Character: And it must be so in all those, who regard him, as every *Regenerate Soul* does, as the Author of Divine Light and Life, and as the Source of Love and Happiness, by whom this *Love of GOD* is *shed abroad in the Heart*<sup>m</sup>, while it is *enlarged* with sacred Delight to *run the Way of his Commandments*<sup>n</sup>; as that *Spirit*, by whom we are *sealed to the Day of Redemption*<sup>o</sup>, and who brings down the *Foretastes of Heaven* to that Heart in which he dwells, and which by his ~~Pr~~ence he consecrates as the *Temple of GOD*<sup>p</sup>.

AND most natural is it, that a Soul filled with these Impressions and Views, should overflow with unutterable Joy, and feeling itself thus happy in an Intercourse with its *GOD*, should be enlarged in *Love to Man*: *For*, says the *Apostle*, *ye are taught of GOD to love one another*<sup>q</sup>. Those, whom he apprehends as his *Brethren* by regenerating Grace, he knows are with him *beloved of the Lord*; and as he hopes to dwell with them for ever in Glory, he must *love them* so far

as

<sup>1</sup> Rom. xv. 30.   <sup>m</sup> Rom. v. 5.   <sup>n</sup> Psal. xix. 32.  
• Eph. iv. 30.   <sup>p</sup> I Cor. iii. 16.   <sup>o</sup> I Thess. iv. 9.

as he knows them now. And tho' a narrow Education, and that Bigotry, which sometimes conceals itself under very honourable and pious Names, may perhaps influence even a sanctified Heart, so far as to entertain unkind Suspicions as to those whose Religious Sentiments may differ from his own, and it may be, to pass some rash Censures upon them ; yet as his Acquaintance with them increases, and he discerns, under their different Forms, the Traces of their common Father, his Prejudices wear off, and that sometimes by very sensible Degrees ; and Christians receive one another, as Christ has received them all<sup>1</sup>. And where the Good Man cannot love others with a *Love of Complacency and Esteem*, he at least beholds them with a *Love of Compassion and Pity* ; and remembers the Relation of Fellow-Creatures, where he sees no Reason to hope that they are Fellow-Heirs with him. In a Word, the Heart is melted down into Tenderness ; it is warmed with generous Sentiments ; it longs for Opportunities of diffusing Good of all Kinds, both Temporal and Spiritual, wide as its Influence can reach ; it beats with an Ardour, which sometimes painfully recoils upon a Man's Self, for Want of Ability to help others in Proportion to his Desire to do it : And that God, who knows all the

inmost Workings of his Mind, hears many an importunate *Intercession for others* in the Hours of solemn Devotion, and many a compassionate *Ejaculation*, which he is occasionally sending up to Heaven from Time to Time, as he passes through so sinful and so calamitous a World.

THESE are the *ruling Affections* in the Heart of a Good Man; and though it is neither reasonable, nor possible, that he should entirely divest himself of *Self-love*, yet he endeavours to regulate it so, that it may not interfere with the more important Consideration of General Good. *Self* has the lowest Place in his Regards, nor does he limit his Affection to a *Party*; but aiming at extensive Usefulness, he guards against those immoderate Attachments to particular Friendships, and those extravagant Sallies of personal Fondness, which are often no more than *Self-love* under a specious Disguise; which at once alienate the Heart from GOD, and contract the *Social Affections* within very narrow, and those very irregular Bounds; and so prove almost as fatal to the Health of the *Mind*, as an excessive Flow of Blood into one Part, would be to that of the *Body*.

I HAVE enlarged so copiously on this Change in the leading Affection of the Mind,

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that I must touch in a more transient Manner on the rest. I add therefore,

2. THAT a Regenerate Soul has New Aversions:

He once hated Knowledge, and did not chuse the Fear of the Lord<sup>1</sup>. He hated the Light<sup>1</sup>, which disclosed to the aking Eye of his Conscience the beloved and indulged Irregularities of his Heart. He hated every Thing, that laid an Embargo upon his Lusts; and was ready to count those for his Enemies, that plainly admonished him, and secretly to dislike those, whose Conduct even silently reproved him. But now all these Things are amiable to him; and those are esteemed his most valuable Friends, whose Example may be most edifying, whose Instructions may be most useful, and whose Admonitions may be most faithful. For he now hates every false Way<sup>2</sup>; yea, and every vain Thought too<sup>2</sup>. He looks upon every irregular Desire, as an Enemy, which he longs utterly to subdue; and especially strives against that Sin which does most easily beset him, and abhors it more than he ever delighted in it. And though he rather pities, than hates the Persons of the most

F 4 wretch-

<sup>1</sup> Pro. i. 29.    <sup>1</sup> John iii. 20.    <sup>2</sup> Psal. cxix.  
104.    <sup>2</sup> Ver. 113.

wretched and mischievous Transgressors, yet he "can no longer continue an indear<sup>ing</sup> Friendship with those, who were once his Seducers to Sin, and his Companions in it. In this Sense, like *David*, he *hates the Congregation of Evil-doers, and will not sit with the Wicked*<sup>x</sup>, and if they will not be wrought upon by his compassionate Endeavours to reclaim them, he will soon break off the infectious Intercourse, and say, *Depart from me, ye Evil doers, for I determine that I will keep the Commandments of my GOD*<sup>y</sup>.

### 3. THE Regenerate Man has also New Desires.

THERE was a Time, when *Sinful Passions*, as the *Apostle* expresses it, did work in his Members to bring forth *Fruit unto Death*<sup>z</sup>. He was fulfilling the Desires of the *Flesh, and of the Mind*<sup>a</sup>, and making Provision to fulfil the *Lusts* of both<sup>b</sup>. But now he earnestly desires a *Conformity to GOD*, as his highest Happiness; and can look up to him, and say, "Oh Lord, the Desire of " my Soul is to thy Name, and to the Re- " membrance of thee<sup>c</sup>; to maintain such a " Sense of thy Presence at all Times, as " may influence my Heart to think, my " Lips

<sup>x</sup> Psal. xxvi. 5. <sup>y</sup> Psal. cxix. 115. <sup>z</sup> Rom. vi.  
5. <sup>a</sup> Eph. ii. 3. <sup>b</sup> Rom. xiii. 14. <sup>c</sup> Isa. xxvii. 8.

“ Lips to speak, and my Hands to act, in  
 a Manner suitable to that Remembrance,  
 and agreeable to thy wise and holy Will.”  
 • He now *hungers and thirsts after Righteousness*<sup>d</sup>; feels as real an *Appetite* after more advanced Degrees of Piety and Holiness, as he ever felt toward the Gratification of his Senses; and *esteems* the proper Methods of attaining these advanced Degrees, even *more than his necessary Food*<sup>e</sup>. Instead of *desiring* to run through a long Course of *Animal Enjoyments*, he *desires* to get above them; *longs* to be a pure and triumphant Spirit in the refined Regions of Immortality; and is *willing rather to be absent from the Body, and to be present with the Lord*<sup>f</sup>.

BUT I wave the further Illustration of this, till I come to consider the *New Hopes* which inspire him. I therefore add, as a necessary Consequence of these *New Desires*,

#### 4. THAT the *Regenerate Man* has *New Fears*.

PAIN and Sorrow, Disappointment and Affliction, he naturally *feared*; and the Forebodings of his own Mind would sometimes awaken the *Fears of future Punishment*, according to the righteous Judgment of

<sup>d</sup> Matt. v. 6.   <sup>e</sup> Job xxiii. 12.   <sup>f</sup> 2 Cor. v. 8.

of an offended GOD : But now he *fears* not merely Punishment, but Guilt ; *fears* the Remonstrance of an injured Conscience ; for he reverences *Conscience* as GOD's Vicegerent in his Bosom. He therefore *fears* the most *secret sins*, as well as those which might occasion publick Disgrace ; yea, he *fears*, lest by a precipitate and inconsiderate Conduct he should contract Guilt before he is aware. He *fears*, lest he should inadvertently injure and grieve others, even the weakest and the meanest. He *fears* using his *Liberty*, in a Manner that might insnare his Brethren, or might occasion any Scanda<sup>l</sup> to a *Christian* Profession : For such is the Sensibility of his Heart in this respect , that he would be more deeply concerned for the Dishonour brought to GOD, and the Reproach which might be thrown on Religion, by any unsuitable Conduct of his ; than merely for that Part of the Shame, that might immediately and directly fall upon himself. But again,

### 5. THE Regenerate Man has *New Joys.*

THESE arise chiefly, from an Intercourse with *GOD* through *Jesus Christ* ; and from a Review of *himself*, as under the sanctifying Influences of his Grace, and as brought into a State of Favour with him, in Proportion .

portion to the Degree in which he can discern himself in this Character and State.

You know David, speaking of GOD, calls him *bis exceeding Joy<sup>g</sup>*; and declares *the Gladness he had put into his Heart*, by *lifting up the Light of his Countenance upon him*, to be far beyond what they could have, *whose Corn and Wine increased<sup>h</sup>*. And the Apostle Paul speaks of Christians, as *joying in GOD through Jesus Christ<sup>i</sup>*, and as *rejoicing in Christ Jesus<sup>k</sup>*: And Peter also describes them, as those, who *believing in him, tho' unseen, rejoice with Joy unspeakable, and full of Glory<sup>l</sup>*.

PERHAPS there was a Time, when the Good Man censured all Pretences of this Kind, now at least in these latter Days of Christianity, as an empty enthusiastick Pretence: But since he has *tasted that the Lord is gracious<sup>m</sup>*, he has that Experimental Knowledge of their Reality and Excellence, which he can confidently oppose to all the most artful and sophistical Cavils; and could as soon doubt, whether the Sun enlightens his Eyes, and warms his Body, as he could question, whether GOD has Ways of manifesting himself to Souls, when it is felt with unutterable Delight: And when thus entertain'd,

<sup>g</sup> Psal. xlivi. 4.    <sup>h</sup> Psal. iv. 6, 7.    <sup>i</sup> Rom. v. 11.  
<sup>j</sup> Phil. iii. 3.    <sup>k</sup> Pet. i. 8.    <sup>l</sup> Pet. ii. 3.

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tain'd, he can adopt David's Words, and say, that *his Soul is satisfied as with Marrow and Fatness*, so that *with joyful Lips he praises GOD*<sup>a</sup>, when *his Meditation of him is thus sweet*<sup>b</sup>, and *GOD says unto his Soul, I am thy Salvation*<sup>c</sup>.

THE Survey of the *Lord Jesus Christ* gives him also unutterable Joy; while he reflects on that ample Provision, which God has made by him, for the Supply of all his Necessities; and that firm Security, which is given to his Soul, by a believing Union with *Christ*; whereby *his Life* is connected with that of *his Saviour*. In his constant Presence, in his faithful Care, he can boast *all the Day long*<sup>d</sup>; and that Friendship, which establishes a Community of Interests between him and his Lord, engages him to rejoice in that Salvation and Happiness, to which he is advanced at the Right Hand of *GOD*, and gives him, by joyful Sympathy, his Part with *Christ* in Glory, before he personally arrives at the full Possession of it.

I ADD, that he also rejoices in the Consciousness of God's gracious Work upon his own Soul, so far as he can discern the Traces of it there. He delights to feel himself, as  
• • • it

<sup>a</sup> Psal. lxiii. 5.    <sup>b</sup> Psal. civ. 34.    <sup>c</sup> Psal. xxxv. 3.  
<sup>d</sup> Psal. xliv. 8.

SER.3. *and in a Work of Grace in his Soul.* 77

it were, cured of the mortal Disease, with which he once saw himself infected; to find himself in Health and Vigour of Mind, renewed to a Conformity with the Divine Image. He *delights* to look inward, and see that Transformation of Soul, which has *made the Wilderness like the Garden of the Lord*<sup>1</sup>, so that *instead of the Thorn there shall come up the Fir-tree, and instead of the Briar the Myrtle*<sup>2</sup>. Thus the Good Man is satisfied from himself<sup>3</sup>; and tho' he humbly refers the ultimate Glory of all to that *GOD*, by whose Grace he is what he is<sup>4</sup>, he enters with Pleasure into his own Mind, and reckons it a Part of Gratitude to his great Benefactor, to enjoy with as high a Relish as he can, the present Workings of Divine Grace within him, as well as the pleasing Prospect of what it will farther do.

BUT this Head has so near a Resemblance to some that are to follow, that were I to enlarge upon it, as I easily might, I should leave Room for nothing different to be said upon them. I will only add,

6. THAT as the Counter-part of this,  
*New Sorrows* will arise in the Mind of  
a *Regenerate Man.*

• • • THESE

<sup>1</sup> Isai. li. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Isai. lv. 13.

<sup>3</sup> Prov. xiv. 14.

<sup>4</sup> Cor. xv, 10.

THESE are particularly such, as spring—from the *Withdrawings* of GOD's *Presence*,—from the *Remainder* of *Sin in his Soul*,—and from the *Prevalence* of it in the *World about him*.

THE Regenerate Man will mourn, “when the reviving *Manifestations* of GOD's *Presence* are withdrawn from his Soul.” It seems very absurd to interpret the numberless Passages in the Sacred Writers, in which they complain of the *Hidings* of GOD's Face from them, as if they merely referred to the Want of Temporal Enjoyments, or to the Pressure of Temporal Calamities. If the Light of GOD's Countenance, which they so expressly oppose to Temporal Blessings, signify a *Spiritual Enjoyment*, the Want of it must relate to *Spiritual Deser-tion*. And I believe, there are few Christians in the World, who are entirely unacquainted with this. They have most of them their Seasons, when they walk in *Darkness*, and see little or no Light<sup>w</sup>: And this, not only when anxious Fears arise with relation to their own Spiritual State; but at some other Times, when tho' they can in the Main call God their Father, yet he seems as it were, to stand afar off, and to continue them at a *Distance*, which wears the Face of

of Unkindness ; especially under Temptations, and other Afflictions, in which they lose their lively Sense of God's Presence, and that indear-ing Freedom of Converse with him, which, through the Influence of *the Spirit of Adoption* on their Souls, they have sometimes known. If this be mysterious and unintelligible to some of you, I am heartily sorry for it : But I do not remember, that I was ever intimately acquainted with any one, who seemed to me ~~a real Christian~~, that has not, upon mentioning the Case, acknowledged, that he has felt something of it : At least I will boldly venture to say this, that if you are *truly Regenerate*, and do not know what I mean by it, it is because you have hitherto been kept in a continual Flow of holy Joy, or at least in a calm and cheerful Persuasion of your Interest in the Divine Favour : And even such may see the Day, when *strong* as their Mountain seems to stand, *GOD may bide his Face to their Trouble*<sup>x</sup> : Or, however they will infer from what they now feel, that it must be *a mournful Case* whenever it occurs ; and that *Sorrow* in such a Circumstance will soon strike on a truly sanctified Heart, and wound it very deep.

THE Sorrow of a Good Man also arises  
“ from

<sup>x</sup> Psal. xxx. 7.

" from the *Remainder of Sin in his Soul*." Tho' he is *upright before GOD*, and proves it by *keeping himself from his Iniquity*<sup>y</sup>; yet he cries out, *Who can understand his Errors*<sup>z</sup>? *Who can say, I have made my Heart clean, I am pure from my Sin*<sup>a</sup>? A Sense of the *Sinfulness of his Nature* humbles him in the Dust; and the *first Risings* of irregular Inclinations and Passions, give him a tender Pain, with which a carnal Heart is unacquainted, even when Sin is domineering within him.

AND once more, "The *Prevalence of Sin in the World around him*" is a *Grief* to one that is *born of GOD*. It pierces him to the Heart, to see Men dishonouring **GOD**, and ruining themselves: He beholds *Transgressors*, as *David* well expresses it, with a Mixture of *Indignation* and *Sorrow*<sup>b</sup>; and when he seriously considers, how common, and yet how sad a Case it is, he can perhaps borrow the Words of the same Prophet, so far as to say, that *Rivers of Waters run down his Eyes, because Men keep not the Law of GOD*<sup>c</sup>.—Now as these are *Sorrows*, that seldom do at all affect the Heart of an *Unregenerate Man*, I thought it the more proper to mention them, to assist you in your Enquiries into your own State.

SUCH

<sup>y</sup> Psal. xviii. 23.   <sup>z</sup> Psal. xix. 12.   <sup>a</sup> Prov. xx. 9.   
<sup>b</sup> Psal. cxxxix. 21.   <sup>c</sup> Psal. cxix. 136.

SUCH are the Affections of Love and Aversion, of Desire and Fear, of Joy and Sorrow, which fill the Breast of the Regenerate Man, and naturally arise from those New Apprehensions, which were described under the former Head. I add,

### III. THAT he has also New RESOLUTIONS.

You will easily apprehend, I speak of those that are formed for the Service of GOD, ~~and against Sin~~. I readily acknowledge, that there are often, in Unregenerate Men, some Resolutions of this Kind, and perhaps those very warm, and for the present very sincere ; yet there is a considerable Difference between them, and those we are now to represent ; as the Resolutions of the truly Good Man are more universal, more immediate, and more humble.

- 1. THE Resolutions which he now forms, are more universal than they ever were before.

HE does not now resolve against this or that Sin, but against all ; against Sin, as Sin ; as opposite to the Holiness of GOD, and destructive of the Honour and Happiness of the Rational Creation. He does not say with Naaman, concerning this or that more convenient

82 *His Resolutions are universal, SER. 3.*  
venient Iniquity, *The Lord pardon thy Servant in this Thing*<sup>a</sup>; nor does he resolve to excuse himself in an Indulgence, even to *that Sin which does most easily beset him*<sup>c</sup>: But rather, in his General Determination against Sin, and in those solemn Engagements with which such Determinations may be attended, he fixes especially upon *those Sins*, which he might before have been most ready to except.

2. *THE Resolutions of the Regenerat<sup>b</sup> Man are more immediate.*

IT very frequently happens, that while others are under awakening Impressions, as they see a Necessity for parting with *their Sins*, and engaging in what they may call *a Religious Life*, they *resolve upon it*: But then they think it may be delayed a little longer; perhaps *a few Years*, or at least *a few Weeks or Days*; or they, perhaps, refer it to some *remarkable Period* which is approaching, which they flatter themselves they shall make yet *more remarkable*, as the *Æra* of their Reformation: But in the mean time, they will take *their Farewel* of their Lusts by a few more Indulgences; and thus they delude themselves, and rivet on their Chains faster than before. But the Good Man, with *David*, makes *Haste*, and delays not to keep the Commandments.<sup>c</sup>

<sup>a</sup> 2 Kings v. 18.

<sup>c</sup> Heb. xii. 1.

~~mandments of GOD~~. He is like the *Prodigal*, who as soon as ever he said, *I will arise and go to my Father*, immediately arose and came to him <sup>g</sup>. He reckons the Time he has already spent in the Service of Sin *may suffice* <sup>h</sup>, and that indeed it is far more than enough: He wishes, he could call back that which is past; but he determines, that he will not take one Step further in this unhappy Path. He fully *purposes*, that he will never once more, deliberately and presumptuously offend GOD, in any Matter, *Great or Small*; if any Thing can be called *Small*, which is a deliberate and apprehended Offence: And he *determines*, that from this Moment he will yield himself to *GOD*, as alive from the Dead, and employ his Members as *Instruments of Righteousness* <sup>i</sup>. But then,

3. His *Resolutions* are *more modest and humble*, than they have ever been before.

— AND this indeed is the great Circumstance, that renders them *more effectual*.—When an awakened Sinner feels himself most enslaved to his Vices, he pleases himself with this Thought, that there is a *secret Kind of Spring* in his Mind, which when he pleases to exert, he can break through all at once,

G 2 and

• Psal. cxix. 60.      <sup>g</sup> Luke xv. 18, 20.      <sup>h</sup> 1 Pet.  
v. 3.      <sup>i</sup> Rom. vi. 13.

and commence, when ever that unhappy Necessity comes upon him, a very Religious Man in a Moment. And when Conscience presses him with the Memory of *past Guilt*, and the Representation of *future Danger*, he cuts off these Remonstrances with a hasty *Resolve*, “ I will do so no more : ” But then perhaps, the Effect of this may not last *a Day*; tho’ possibly, it may at other Times continue *a few Weeks or Months*, where the grosser Acts of Sin are concerned: And indeed his *Resolutions* seldom reach ~~farther~~ than these; for the Necessity of a sanctified Heart is a Mystery, which he has never yet learnt.—But a truly *Regenerate Man* has learnt Wisdom from this Experience of *his own*, and the Observation of *other Mens Frailty*. He feels his own Weakness, and is so thoroughly aware of the Treachery of his own Heart, that he is almost afraid to express in Words *the Purpose* which his very Soul is forming: He is almost afraid to turn *that Purpose* into a *Vow* before GOD, lest the Breach of *that Vow* should increase his Guilt: But this he can say, with repenting *Ephraim*, *Lord, turn thou me, and I shall be turned<sup>k</sup>*; and with *David*, *Hold up my Goings in thy Paths, that my Foot-steps may not slip*<sup>l</sup>! “ I am exceeding frail; but, Lord, be “ thou Surety for thy Servant for good<sup>m</sup>, and “ t<sup>n</sup>ken

<sup>k</sup> Jer. xxxi. 18. <sup>l</sup> Psal. xvii. 5. <sup>m</sup> Psal. cxix. 122.

“ then I shall be safe ! Do thou rescue me from Temptations, and I shall be delivered ! Do thou fill my Heart with holy Sentiments, and I will breathe them out before thee ! Do thou excite and maintain a Zeal for thy Service, and then I will exert myself in it.” And when once a Man is come to such a *Distrust of himself* ; when *like a little Child*, he stretches out his Hand to be led by his *Heavenly Father*, and trusts in his Guardian Care alone for his Security and Comfort ; then *out of Weakness he is made strong* ; and goes on safe, tho perhaps trembling ; and sees those that made the loudest Boasts, and placed the greatest Confidence in themselves, *falling on the Right Hand and the Left*, and all their Bravery melting away like *Snow before the Sun.*

#### IV. THE Regenerate Man has New LABOURS and Employments.

NOT that his former *Employment* in Secular Life is laid aside : It would ordinarily be a very dangerous Snare, for a Man to imagine that God requires this. On the contrary, the *Apostle* gives it in Charge to *Christian Converts*, that *in what Calling soever a Man is found, when he is called into the Profession of the Gospel, he should therein abide*

G 3

Heb. xi. 34.

86 *New Labours to promote Religion* SER. 3.  
*abide with GOD*<sup>o</sup>. But when he becomes a real *Christian*, he prosecutes this *Calling*, whatever it is, with a New Spirit and Temper, from New Principles, and to New Purposes. While his Hands are labouring in the World, his Heart is often rising to *GOD*: He consecrates *his Work* to the Divine Honour, and to the Credit of Religion; and desires, that *his Merchandise*, and his Gain, *may in this Sense be Holiness to the Lord*<sup>p</sup>, by employing it to support the *Familv*, which Providence has committed to *his Charge*<sup>q</sup>, and to relieve the *Poor*, which *Christ* recommends to his Pity<sup>r</sup>: And as he depends upon *GOD* to give him Wisdom and Success, in the Conduct of his Affairs, he ascribes the Glory of that Success *to him*; not *sacrificing to his own Net, nor burning Incense to his own Drag*<sup>s</sup>.

AND I will further add, That *Regeneration* introduces a Set of *New Labours*, added to the former, with which the Man was before utterly unacquainted.—We may consider as the principal and chief of these, the *great Labour* of purifying the *Heart*, of conquering sinful Inclinations and Affections, and of approaching *GOD* by a more intimate Access, and more indeared Converse.—Now they

• *1 Cor.* vii. 20, 24.    p *Isai.* xxiii. 18.    q *1 Tim.*  
v. 8.    : *Acts* xx. 35.    { *Hab.* i. 16.

they that imagine this to be an *easy Matter*, know little of the Human Heart, little of the Spirituality of God's Nature, and his Law. Give me leave to say, that the *Labours of the Body* in cultivating the Earth, are much more *easily* performed, than this *Spiritual Husbandry*. To weed a Soil so luxuriant in Evil Productions, and to raise a plentiful Harvest of Holy Affections and Actions in a Soil so barren of Good ; to regulate Appetites and Passions, so exorbitant as those of the Human Heart naturally are, and to awaken in it suitable Affections ; to be abundant in the Fruits of Righteousness, and to converse with God in the Exercise of Devotion : These are *no little Things* ; nor will a little Resolution, Watchfulness and Activity suffice, in order to the Discharge of such a Business. It is comparatively *easy*, through the *Forms of Prayer* and *Praise*, whatever they are ; to *read*, or from present Conception to *utter*, a few Words before God : But to *unite the Heart* in God's Service, to *wrestle with him for a Blessing*, to *pour out the Heart before him*, to speak to him as *searching the very Heart* ; so that He should say, " This is Prayer :" This, my Brethren, is *a Work indeed*; and he that is conscientious in the Discharge of it, will find, that it is not to be dispatched in a few hasty Moments, nor without serious

Reflection, and a resolute Watch maintained over the Spirit. , ,

NEW *Labours* also arise to the *Regenerate Soul*, in Consequence of the Concern it has to promote *Religion* in the World.— Being possessed, as I formerly shewed you the Heart of the Good Man is, with an *unfeigned Love* to his Fellow-Creatures, and knowing of how great Importance *Religion* is to the Happiness of Men, he pleads earnestly with God for the Propagation and Success of the *Gospel*: And he endeavours, according to his Ability and Opportunity, "to promote it ; to promote *pure and undefiled Religion* in his Family, and his Neighbourhood, even in all around him. And this requires Observation and Application, that this Attempt may be prudently conducted, and great Resolution in order to its being rendered effectual: It requires great Diligence in *watching over ourselves*, lest our Examples prove inconsistent with our Precepts ; and no small Degree of *Courage*, considering how averse the Generality of Mankind are to Admonitions and Reproofs ; in Consequence of which, a Person can hardly act the Part of a faithful *Friend*, without exposing himself to the Hazard of being accounted an *Enemy*.

SUCH are the *New Labours* of the real *Christian*: Let any Man try to perform them, and he will not find them *light*: But to encourage the Attempt, let me further add,

V. THAT the *Regenerate* Soul has its  
New ENTERTAINMENTS too.

HE has *Pleasures*, which *a Stranger* intermeddles not with<sup>1</sup>, and which the *World* can neither give, nor take away<sup>2</sup>; *Pleasures*, which a thousand Times over-ballance the most painful *Labours*, and the most painful *Sufferings* too; and which sweetly mingling themselves with the various Circumstances of Life, through which the *Christian* passes, do as it were *gild* all the Scene, and make all the Fatigues and Self-denial of his Life far more agreeable, than any of those *Delights* the *Worldling* or the *Sensualist* can find in the Midst of his unbounded and studied Indulgences.—But here I shall be in great Danger of repeating what I said under a former Head, when I was speaking of the *New Joys*, which the *Christian* feels, in Consequence of the great *Change* that *Regeneration* makes in his Soul: And therefore, omitting what I then observed, concerning the *Pleasure of Communion with GOD thro' Christ*,

<sup>1</sup> Prov. xiv. 10. • <sup>2</sup> John xvi. 22.

*Christ, and of perceiving a Work of Divine Grace upon the Soul, I shall now touch upon some other Sources of exalted Entertainment, which did not so directly fall under that Head.*

i. *THE Christian finds New Pleasures in the Word of GOD.*

You know, with what Relish the *Saints of old* spake of it. *Thy Words were found, saith the Prophet, and I did eat them; and thy Word was unto me the Joy and Rejoicing of mine Heart*<sup>w</sup>. *Thy Statutes, says the Psalmist, are more to be desired than Gold, yea, than much fine Gold; they are sweeter also than Honey, and the Honey-Comb*<sup>x</sup>.—The Apostle Peter beautifully represents this, when he exhorts the *Saints* to whom he wrote, *as new-born Babes to desire the sincere Milk of the Word, that they might grow thereby*<sup>y</sup>. And the *Infant*, that smiles on the Breast, and with such Eagerness and Delight draws its Nourishment from it, seems an amiable Image of the humble *Christian*, who receives the Kingdom of *GOD*, and the Word of that Kingdom, *as a little Child*<sup>z</sup>; who lays up Scripture in his *Heart*<sup>a</sup>, and draws forth the Sweetness of it, with a firm Persuasion, that

<sup>w</sup> Jer. xv. 16.    <sup>x</sup> Psal. xix. 10.    <sup>y</sup> 1 Pet. ii. 2.  
<sup>z</sup> Mark x. 15.    <sup>a</sup> Job xxii. 22.

that it is indeed *the Word of GOD*, and was appointed by him for the Food of his Soul.

- 2. HE also finds *New Pleasures* in the *Ordinances of Divine Worship.*

HE is glad, when it is said unto him, *Let us go into the House of the Lord*<sup>b</sup>. He indeed esteems the Tabernacles of the Lord as amiable, and regards a Day in his Courts as better than a thousand elsewhere<sup>c</sup>. And this Pleasure arises, not merely from any Thing peculiar in the Administrations of this or that Man, who officiates in Holy Things; but from the Nature of the Exercise in general, and from a Regard to the Divine Authority of those Institutions, which are there observed. He feels a sacred Delight, in an Intercourse with GOD in those Solemnities; in Comparison of which all the Graces of Composition and Delivery appear as little, as the Harmony of *Instruments*, or the Perfume of *Incense*, to one of the Old Testament Saints, when compared with the Light of GOD's Countenance, which was lifted up on the pious Worshipper under the Mosaick Forms, when in his Temple every one spake of his Glory<sup>d</sup>. One Thing has he desired of the Lord, and that he seeks after, that he may dwell

<sup>b</sup> Psal. cxxii. 1.    <sup>c</sup> Psal. lxxxiv. 1, 10.    <sup>d</sup> Psal. xxix. 9.

*dwell in the House of the Lord all the Days of his Life ; not to amuse his vain Imagination not to gratify his Ear, not to indulge his Curiosity with useless Enquiries, nor merely to exercise his Understanding with sublime Speculations ; but to behold the Beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in his Temple* <sup>c</sup>.

3. HE likewise finds a *New Entertainment* in the *Conversation of Christian Friends.*

HE now knows what it is, to have *Fellowship with those*, whose *Communion is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ* <sup>f</sup>. His *Delight is now in them*, that are truly *the Excellent of the Earth* <sup>g</sup>. He delights to dismiss the usual Topicks of Modern Conversation, that some Religious Subject may be assumed, not as Matter of Dispute; but as Matter of devout Recollection; and loves to hear the plainest *Christian* express his Experimental Sense of Divine Things. Those Sentiments of Piety and Love, which come warm from a gracious Heart, are always pleasing to him; and those appear the dearest *Bands of Friendship*, which may draw him nearer to his Heavenly Father, and unite his Soul in Ties of more ardent Love to his Redeemer. A Society of such *Friends* is indeed

<sup>c</sup> Psal. xxvii. 4. <sup>f</sup> 1 John i. 3. <sup>g</sup> Psal. xvi. 3.

deed a Kind of Anticipation of *Heaven*; and chuse, and delight in such, is no contemptible Token, that the Soul has attained to some considerable Degree of Preparation for it. I only add,

VI. THAT in Consequence of all this,  
the *Regenerate Soul* has *New Hopes*  
and *Prospects*.

MEN might be very much assisted in judging of their true State, if they would seriously reflect, what it is they *hope* and *wish for*? what are those *Expectations* and *Desires*, that most strongly impress their Minds? A vain Mortal, untaught and unchanged by Divine Grace, is always dressing up to himself some empty Phantom of Earthly Happiness, which he looks after and pursues; and foolishly imagines, " Could I " grasp it, and keep it, I should be happy." But Divine Grace teaches the real *Christian* to give up these empty Schemes: " GOD, does he say, " never intended *this World* for " my Happiness: He will make it tolerable " to me; he will give me so much of it, " as he sees consistent with my highest In- " terest; he will enable me to derive In- " struction, and it may be Consolation, out " of its Disappointments and Distresses: " But he reserves my Inheritance for the " *Eternal*

" *Eternal World.* I am begotten again to a  
 " lively Hope, by the Resurrection of Jesus  
 " Christ from the Dead, even to the Hope  
 " of an Inheritance incorruptible, and unde-  
 " filed, and that fadeth not away": And tho'  
 " it be for the present reserved in Heaven,  
 " it is so safe, and so great, that it is well  
 " worth my waiting for, tho' ever so long;  
 " for the Things that are not seen, are Eter-  
 " nal." And this indeed is the true Char-  
 racter of a Good Man. *Eternity* fills his  
 Thoughts; and growing sensible, in another  
 Manner than he ever was before, of the  
 Importance of it, he pants after the Enjoy-  
 ment of *Eternal Happiness*. Assign any  
 limited Duration to his Enjoyment of GOD  
 in the Regions of Glory, and you would  
 overwhelm him with Disappointment: Talk  
 of Hundreds, of Thousands, of Millions of  
 Years, the Disappointment is almost equal:  
 Periods like these, seem scarce distinguis-  
 able from each other, when compared with  
 an *Eternal Hope*. To *Eternity* his Desires  
 and Expectations are raised; and he can be  
 contented with nothing less, than *Eternity*:  
 Perfect Holiness, and perfect Happiness for  
 Ever and Ever, without any Mixture of  
 Sin, or any Allay of Sorrow; this he firmly  
 expects, this he ardently breathes after; a  
 Felicity, which an *Immortal Soul* shall never  
 out-

SER. 3. that is the Object of his Hopes. 95

outlive, and which an *Eternal G O D* shall never cease to communicate. *This Heavenly Country* he seeks; he considers himself as a *Citizen of it*, and endeavours to maintain his *Conversation* there<sup>k</sup>; to carry on, as it were, a daily Trade for *Heaven*, and to lay up a *Treasure* there<sup>l</sup>; in which he may be rich and great, when all the Pomp of this *Earth* is passed away as a *Dream*, and all its most precious Metals and Gems are melted down among its vilest Materials in the last Universal Burning.

— THIS is the Change, the glorious Change which *Regeneration* makes, in a Man's *Character*, and *Views*: And who shall dare to speak, or to think, contemptibly of it? Were we indeed to represent it as a Kind of *Charm*, depending on an *External Ceremony*, which it was the peculiar Prerogative of a certain Order of Men to perform, and yet on which *Eternal Life* was suspended; one might easily apprehend, that it would be brought into much Suspicion. Or should we place it in any *Mechanical Transports* of Animal Nature, in any *blind Impulse*, in any *strong Feelings*, not to be described, or accounted for, or argued upon, but known by some inward inexplicable *Sensation* to be Divine; we could not wonder, if calm and prudent Men

<sup>k</sup> Phil. iii. 20.

<sup>l</sup> Matt. vi. 20.

Men were slow to admit the Pretension to it, and were fearful it might end in the most dangerous *Enthusiasm*, made impious by excessive *Appearances of Piety*.— But when it is delineated by such fair and bright *Characters*, as those that have now been drawn; when these *Divine Lineaments* on the Soul, by which it bears the Image of its Maker's Rectitude and Sanctity, are considered as its *necessary Consequence*, or rather as its *very Essence*; one would imagine, that every rational Creature, instead of cavilling at it, should pay an immediate Homage to it, and earnestly desire, and labour, and pray, to experience the *Change*: Especially as it is a *Change so desirable* for itself; as we acknowledge *Health* to be, tho' a Man were not to be *rewarded*, for *being well*; nor *punished*, any farther than with the *Malady* he contracts, for any Negligence in this respect.

WHERE is there any Thing can be more *ornamental* to our Natures, than to have all the *Powers of the Mind* thus *changed* by Grace, and our *Pursuits* directed to such Objects, as are worthy of the best Attention and Regard? — to have our *Apprehensions* of Divine and Spiritual Things enlarg'd, and to have right Conceptions of the most important Matters; — to have the Stream of our *Affections* turn'd from empty Vanities, to Objects that are proper to excite and fix them; — to have

have our *Resolutions* set against all Sin, and a full Purpose form'd within us of an immediate Reformation and Return to GOD, with a Dependance on his Grace to help us *both to will and to do*; — to have our *Labours* stedfastly applied, to conquer Sin, and to promote Religion in ourselves and others; — to have our *Entertainments* founded in a Religious Life, and flowing in upon us from the sweet Intercourse we have with GOD in his Word and Ordinances, and the delightful Conversation that we sometimes have with Christian Friends; — and finally, to have our *Hopes* drawn off from Earthly Things, and fixed upon Eternity? — Where is there any Thing can be more honourable to us, than thus to be renewed after the Image of him that created us<sup>m</sup>, and to put on the New Man, which after GOD is created in Righteousness and true Holiness<sup>n</sup>? And where is any Thing that can be more desirable, than thus to have the Darkness of our Understandings cured, and the Disorders rectified, that Sin had brought upon our Nature? Who is there that is so insensible of his Depravity, as that he would not long for such a happy *Change*? Or who is there that knows how excellent a Work it is, to be transformed by the renewing of the Mind<sup>o</sup>, that would not with the greatest Thankfulness

<sup>m</sup> Col. iii. 10.

<sup>n</sup> Eph. iv. 24.

<sup>o</sup> Rom. xii. 2.

98      *A Call to enquire about it.* SER. 3.  
ness adore the Riches of Divine Grace, if it appear that he is thus become a *New Creature*; that *Old Things are passed away, and behold, all Things are become New?*

BUT I shall quickly shew you, that *Regeneration* is not only *ornamental, honourable, and desirable*; but *absolutely necessary*, as ever we would hope to share the Blessings of God's Heavenly Kingdom, and to escape the Horror of those, that are finally, and irrevocably excluded from it. This Argument will employ several succeeding Discourses: But I would dismiss you at present with an earnest Request, that you would in the mean Time renew your Enquiries, as to the Truth of *Regeneration* in your own Souls; which, after all that I have been saying, it will be very inexcusable for you to neglect, as probably you will hear few Discourses, in the whole Course of your Lives, which centre more directly in this Point, or are more industriously calculated to give you the safest and clearest Assistance in it. May GOD abase the Arrogance and Presumption of every self-deceiving Sinner; and awaken the Confidence and Joy of the feeblest Soul, in whom this *New Creation* is begun!

SER-



## S E R M O N IV.

The NECESSITY of REGENERATION argued, from the Immutable Constitution of GOD.

JOHN iii. 3.

*Jesus answered and said unto him,  
Verily, verily I say unto thee,  
Except a Man be born again,  
he cannot see the Kingdom of  
GOD.*

WHILE the Ministers of Christ are discoursing of such a Subject, as I have before me in the Course of these *Lectures*, and particularly in this Branch of them which I am now entering upon, we may surely, with the utmost Reason address our Hearers, in those Words of *Moses to Israel*, in the Conclusion of his dying Discourse: *Set your Hearts unto all the Words which I testify*

100      *The Occasion of the Words.*    SER. 4.  
among you this Day, which ye shall command  
your Children to observe and do, even all the  
Words of this Law; for it is not a vain Thing  
for you, because it is your Life<sup>a</sup>. That must  
undoubtedly be your Life, concerning which  
the Lord Jesus Christ himself, the Incarnate  
Wisdom of GOD, the faithful and true Wit-  
ness<sup>b</sup>, has said, and said it with a solemn  
repeated Affirmation, that without it a Man  
cannot see the Kingdom of GOD.

THE Occasion of his saying it deserves<sup>c</sup> yr  
Notice; tho' the Niceties of the Context  
must be waved in such a Series of Sermons  
as this. He said it to a Few of conside-  
rable Rank, and, as it appears, one of the  
Grand Sanhedrim, or Chief Council of the  
Nation; who came not only for his own  
private Satisfaction, but in the Name of se-  
veral of his Brethren, to discourse with Christ  
concerning his Doctrine, at the first Passover  
he attended at Jerusalem, after he had en-  
ter'd on his publick Ministry. Our Lord  
would, to be sure, be peculiarly careful,  
what Answer he return'd to such an En-  
quiry: And this is his Answer, Verily, verily  
*I say unto thee, Except a Man be born again,*  
*he cannot see the Kingdom of GOD:* As if  
he should have said, "If the Princes of  
"Israel enquire after my Character, let them  
"know, that I came to be a Preacher of Re-

genera-

<sup>a</sup> Deut. xxxii. 46, 47.

<sup>b</sup> Rev. iii. 14.

SER. 4. To be born again is a great Change. 101

"generation; and that the Blessings of that  
Kingdom which I am come to reveal and  
erect, are to be peculiar to Renewed and  
Sanctified Souls; who may, by an easy  
and natural Figure, be said to be born  
again." And the Figure appears very in-  
telligible, and very instructive to those, that  
will seriously consider it; and might lead  
us into a Variety of pertinent and useful  
Remarks.

You easily perceive, that to be born again,  
must intimate a very great Change; coming,  
as it were, into a New World, as an Infant  
does; when after having lived a while a  
Kind of Vegetative Life in the Darkness and  
Confinement of the Womb, it is born into  
open Day; feels the Vital Air rushing in  
on its Lungs, and Light forcing itself upon  
the awaken'd Eyes; hears Sounds before  
unknown; opens its Mouth to receive a  
yet untasted Food; and every day becomes  
acquainted with New Objects, and exerts New  
Powers, till it grows up to the Maturity  
of a perfect Man. Such, and in some Re-  
spects greater and nobler than this, is the  
Change which Regeneration makes in a  
Heart, before unacquainted with Religion;  
as you may have seen at large from the pre-  
ceding Discourses.

But I might further observe, that the  
Phrase in the Text may also express the

102 *It is a very bumbling Change.* SER. 4.  
bumbling Nature of this *Change*, as well as  
the Greatness of it. Erasmus gives this Turn  
to the Words ; and it is so edifying, that I  
should have mentioned it at least, tho' I had  
not thought it so just, as it appears. *To be  
born again*, must signify *to become as a little  
Child*<sup>c</sup>; and our Lord expressly and fre-  
quently assures us, that without this *we can-  
not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven*<sup>d</sup>. He  
has pronounced the very first of his Blessings  
on *Poverty of Spirit*<sup>e</sup>; and where this is  
wanting, the Soul will never be intitled to  
the rest. A mild and humble, a delicate  
and tractable Temper, a Freedom from  
Avarice and Ambition, and an Indifference  
to those great Toys of which Men are gene-  
rally so fond, are all Essential Parts of the  
*Christian Character*; and they have all, in  
one View or another, been touched upon  
in the preceding *Discourses*. Let it be for-  
given however, if considering the Import-  
ance of the Case, you are told again, that  
*in Malice ye must be Children*<sup>f</sup>; and that *if  
any Man think himself wise, he must become a  
Child, and even a Fool, that he may be wise  
indeed*<sup>g</sup>.

I MIGHT observe once more, that these  
Words intimate the *Divine Power*, by which  
this

<sup>c</sup> Matth. xviii. 3.      <sup>d</sup> Mark x. 15. Luke xviii.  
17.      <sup>e</sup> Matth. v. 3.      <sup>f</sup> 1 Cor. xiv. 20.      <sup>g</sup> 1 Cor.  
iii. 18.

SER. 4. *A Divine Power must effect it.* 103

*this great and bumbling Change is effected.*  
Our first Formation and Birth is the *Work of GOD*, and no less really so in the succeeding Generations of Men, than the first Production of *Adam* was, when *GOD formed him of the Dust of the Earth, and breathed into his Nostriis the Breath of Life*<sup>h</sup>. We may each of us say, with respect to the *Natural Birth*, and in an accommodated Sense with respect to the *Spiritual* too, *Thine Eyes did see my Substance, being as yet imperfect, and in thy Book ~~tell~~ all my Members, which in Continuance of Time were fashioned, were written, when as yet there was none of them*<sup>i</sup>. All the first gracious Impressions that were made upon the Mind, and all the gradual Advances of them, till *Christ was formed in the Heart, and the New Creature animated*, must, (as I shall hereafter shew at large,) be ultimately and principally referred into a *Divine Operation*; and in this Sense, it is *GOD* that brings every good Purpose in the Mind to the Birth, and *GOD* that gives Strength to bring forth<sup>k</sup>.

BUT I omit the farther Prosecution of these Remarks at present, because they coincide with what I have said in former Discourses, or what will occur in those which are yet to come: And shall only further consider the Words, as they are a Confirma-

H 4

tion

<sup>h</sup> Gen. ii. 7. . <sup>i</sup> Psal. cxxxix. 16. <sup>k</sup> Isa. lxvi. 9.

tion of, and therefore a proper Introduction to, what I am to lay before you under the *Third General Head* of these Discourses; in which, as I have already shew~~n~~, who may be said to be in an *Unregenerate State*, and how great that *Change* is which *Regeneration* makes in the Soul, I shall now proceed,

**THIRDLY,** To shew the high *Importance*, yea, the absolute *Necessity* of this *Change*.

OUR Lord expresses it in a very lively and awakening Manner, in these few determinate Words, which are here before us: *Verily, verily I say unto thee, Except a Man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of GOD.* You see how emphatical the Words are: He who is himself invariable Truth, *the same Yesterday, to Day, and for Ever*<sup>1</sup>, repeats it again and again, with as much Solemnity as he ever uses upon any Occasion; repeats it *to us*, as he did to *Nicodemus*, “ *Verily, verily I say unto you, that* “ *is, I seriously deliver it as a Truth of* “ *infinite Moment; Except a Man, i. e.* “ *any Man, whatever his Profession, what-* “ *ever his Knowledge, or whatever his Pri-* “ *vileges may be; tho' he be a Jew, tho'* “ *he*

<sup>1</sup> Heb. xiii. 8.

" he be a Pharisee, tho' he be, as thou Nicodemus art, a Ruler or a Senator; except he be born again, and have that great Change, so often described in the Word of God, wrought by the Operation of the Spirit in his Mind, *he cannot see the Kingdom of GOD*: He cannot by any Means approach it, so as to *enter into it*, or have any Share in the important Blessings which it contains."

THAT we may more fully understand, and enter into, this weighty Argument, I shall from these Words,

I. BRIEFLY consider, what it is to *see the Kingdom of GOD*.

II. SHEW, how *absolutely impossible* it is, that any *Unregenerate Man* should *see it*. And,

III. How *wretched* a Thing it is, to be *deprived* of the *Sight*, and *Enjoyment* of it.

AND I am well persuaded, that if you diligently attend to these Things, you will be inwardly and powerfully convinced, that no Argument could be more proper to demonstrate the *Importance* and *Necessity* of *Regeneration*, than this, which *our Lord* has suggested

106 *What we are to understand* SER. A  
suggested in these awful, emphatical, and  
comprehensive Words.

I. I AM to shew you, what it is to see  
*the Kingdom of GOD.*

AND for the Explication of it, it will be  
necessary to consider,—what we are to un-  
derstand by *this Kingdom*;—and what is  
meant by *seeing it.*

[I.] I WOULD shew you, what we are to  
understand by *the Kingdom of GOD.*

AND you will pardon me, if I state the  
Matter pretty largely; because the *Phrase*  
is used in *Scripture* in *different Senses*; and  
the true Interpretation of many Passages in  
it depends on a proper Distinction between  
them. You may observe then for the Ex-  
plication of *this Phrase*,—that *the Kingdom*  
*of GOD* in general signifies “ *the Society*  
“ of those, who profess themselves *the Ser-*  
“ *vants and Subjects of Christ;*” and in  
Consequence of this,—that there are some  
Passages, in which it peculiarly relates to  
“ *the imperfect Dispensation* of *this King-*  
“ *dom*, and the Beginning of it in the  
“ *World;*”—and others, in which it relates,  
to “ *the more perfect Form*, which *this Soci-*  
“ *ety* is to bear in the *World of Glory.*”

THE Kingdom of *G O D*, or the Kingdom of Heaven, (for they are Synonymous Phrases) does in the general signify "the Society of those, who profess themselves the Servants and Subjects of Christ."

You well know, this was a Phrase used among the Jews; and therefore the Original of it is to be traced from the Old Testament: And I apprehend it to be this. Almost every Christian is aware, that in the early Days of the Jewish Commonwealth, as Samuel with great Propriety expresses it, *G O D was their King*<sup>m</sup>. Jehovah was not only the great Object of their Religious Regard, as the Creator and Supporter of the whole World; but he was also their *Supream Civil Magistrate*, settling the Forms of their Political Government, and reserving to himself some of the chief Acts of Royal Authority. They did indeed afterwards *desire another King, like the other Nations* round about them<sup>n</sup>. But still those Kings being appointed by *GOD*, were indeed to be looked upon as no other than his *Vicegerents*, tho' another Kind of Governors than he had originally instituted. By Degrees their peculiar Regard to the Civil Authority of *G O D* among them,

<sup>m</sup> 1 Sam. xii. 12. <sup>n</sup> 1 Sam. viii. 5.

108 *The Kingdom of GOD* the same over them, as well as to his Religious Authority which was nearly connected with it, in a great Measure wore out ; and their Government went through a great, *nearly different Form*, which it would be unnecessary here particularly to describe. Nevertheless GOD was pleased to declare by *King David*, and by many others of his holy Prophets, that he would in due Time interpose to erect another, and a far more extensive *Kingdom* in the World : Not indeed upon the same Political Principles, with that which he exercised over the *Jews*; which Principles would by no Means have suited this extensive Design : But it should be a *Kingdom*, in which the Authority of the *GOD of Heaven* should be acknowledged, and his Laws of universal Righteousness observed, with greater Care, and to nobler Purposes, as well as by a vastly greater Number of Subjects, than ever before. *This Kingdom* he determined to commit to the Government of the *Messiah*, who with regard to this was called *the Lord's Anointed*, *his King whom he set upon his holy Hill of Zion* ; and to whom indeed he would give all Power, not only on Earth, but in Heaven too ; so that having trained up his Subjects here, in the Discipline of Holiness and Obedience, he should at length translate them to another and a better Country, that

• Psal. ii. 2, 6.

¶ Matt. xxviii. 18.

that is, a Heavenly, where they should see his Glory, and should reign with him in Eternal Life.

This plainly appears, from the whole Tenor of the Old and New Testament, to have been the grand Plan of God, with respect to the Messiah's Kingdom : And you will easily see, that coming from God, as its Great Author, and referring to him as its End, it may, with great Propriety, be called *the Kingdom of GOD*; and ultimately terminating in the Heavenly State, it may also properly be called the *Kingdom of Heaven*. These were *Phrases*, which prevailed in the Jewish Nation, before Christ, or his immediate *Fore-runner* appeared : And indeed they were used by Daniel, in a very remarkable Manner, which probably made them so familiar to the Jews, who had some peculiar Reasons for studying his Writings, even more than those of some other Prophets. After that Prophet had foretold the Rise and Fall of several great Empires of the World, he adds, *And in the Days of these last Kings*, i. e. of the Romans, *shall the GOD of Heaven set up a Kingdom, which shall not be destroyed*, — but shall stand for ever<sup>4</sup>. And the Person, whom the Ancient of Days, i. e. the eternal and ever blessed God, should fix on the Throne of this Kingdom, from his appearing in the Human Nature

\* Dan. ii. 44.

110 *The Kingdom of GOD signifies Sy. R. 4..*  
ture is called *the Son of Man* : I saw in the  
*Night-Visions*, and behold, one like the ~~Son of~~  
*Man*, came with the *Clouds of Heaven*, and  
came to the *Ancient of Days*, and they brought  
him near before him : And there was given  
him *Dominion*, and *Glory*, and ~~a~~ *Kingdom*, that  
*all People, Nations, and Languages should*  
*serve him* : *His Dominion is an Everlasting*  
*Dominion, which shall not pass away, and*  
*his Kingdom that which shall not be de-*  
*stroyed.*

IN allusion to this, when our *Lord Jesus Christ* appeared, he called himself *the Son of Man* : And he particularly used this Phrase, as it was exceedingly proper that he should, in this Conference with *Nicodemus*, again and again<sup>1</sup>. And all those, who being convinced of the Divine Commission he bore, submitted themselves to him, might in this respect be said, to enter into the *Kingdom of GOD*, or of *Heaven* ; that is, into the *Society* which had so long been foretold, and expected, under that Title. *This Kingdom*, as the above-mentioned Prophecy declared, was to be raised from very low *Beginnings* under the personal Ministry of *Christ*, and his *Apostles*, till at last it should extend through very distant Regions of the World, and *Kings* and *Princes* should submit themselves to it, and reckon it

<sup>1</sup> Dan. vii. 13, 14.

<sup>1</sup> John iii. 13, 14.

~~SEN~~ 4. the Society of Christ's Servants. 111  
it their Glory to enroll themselves among  
his Subjects.

AGREEABLE to this Meaning of the *Phrase*, and to this View with respect to the Establishment of his *Kingdom*, our *Lord* opened his Ministry, with preaching, as *John the Baptist* had done, *the Kingdom of Heaven*<sup>t</sup>. And you will see, that in most Places of the Gospel, where the *Phrase* occurs, it is to be taken in this Sense. Thus our *Lord* says, *Blessed are the poor in Spirit; for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven*<sup>u</sup>; i. e. they are fit to be Members of this *Society*, and to receive the Blessings of it. *Seek first the Kingdom of GOD, and his Righteousness*<sup>v</sup>; i. e. labour to serve the Interest of this *Society* that I am erecting, and to obtain and promote *that Righteousness*, which it recommends, and is intended to establish in the *World*. And again, *Suffer little Children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the Kingdom of GOD*<sup>x</sup>: Persons with such a Disposition are most fit to become my *Subjects*, and to enter into this Holy and Spiritual *Society*. And when our *Lord* says to the *Pharisees, Publicans and Harlots go into the Kingdom of GOD before you*<sup>y</sup>; he means, no doubt, they are more ready than you, to join themselves to the *Society* of

<sup>t</sup> Matt. iii. 2. iv. 17. <sup>u</sup> Matt. v. 3. <sup>v</sup> Matt. vi. 33. <sup>x</sup> Luke xviii. 16. <sup>y</sup> Mark xxi. 31.

of those, who profess themselves my Subjects.<sup>z</sup> And once more, when he speake<sup>s</sup> some, who chose the Severities of a *jingle Life*, that with less Entanglements they might serve the Interests of his Churck<sup>s</sup>, he expresses it, by their *making themselves Eunuchs for the Kingdom of Heaven's Sake*<sup>a</sup>.

I SHALL only add, that the Phrase, by a near Connection with this Sense, sometimes signifies *the Charter of this Society*, or the *Privileges* which it affords to its Members; as when our Lord says, *Whosoever shall not receive the Kingdom of GOD as a little Child, shall in no wise enter therein*<sup>a</sup>.

THIS then is the general Sense of the Phrase: It signifies “ the Society of those, “ who should submit themselves to the Go-“ vernment of Christ, as appointed by GOD “ to rule over them; who are thereby to “ be consider'd, as *GOD's People* and Sub-“ jects.” In Consequence of this, you will easily apprehend,

2. THAT it comprehends “ the more “ *imperfect Dispensation*, under which “ the Members of this Society are, “ during their Abode in the present “ World.

ALL that passes here, is indeed but the  
Opening

<sup>z</sup> Matt. xix. 12.      <sup>a</sup> Luke xviii. 17.

*Opening of Christ's Kingdom*: Nevertheless this Phrase does sometimes more particularly refer to this Opening; and there are several Passages, in which it would be apparently absurd, to suppose it comprehended the Glories of the Invisible State, to which Christ intended finally to conduct his faithful Servants. Thus our Lord tells the Pharisees, *The Kingdom of GOD is come unto you*<sup>b</sup>, i.e. that gracious Dispensation under the Messiah, by which GOD is gathering Subjects to his Son. And elsewhere he says to them, *The Kingdom of GOD cometh not with Observation*, i.e. not with such Outward Shew as Grandeur as you expect; but behold, it is within, or (as it might be render'd,) among you<sup>c</sup>: GOD has begun to open and establish it, tho' you know it not; and has actually brought many poor Sinners into it, whom you proudly deride, as ignorant and accursed. Thus also when our Lord says to Peter, *I will give unto thee the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven*<sup>d</sup>, it would be most absurd to suppose, he meant to grant to him the Power of admitting into, or excluding from, the World of Glory: But the plain Meaning is, that he should bear a distinguished Office in the Church upon Earth, and be the Means of admitting Jews and

<sup>b</sup> Matt. xii. 28.    <sup>c</sup> Luke xvii. 20, 21.    <sup>d</sup> Matt. xvi. 19.

Gentiles into it. Here, as in many other Instances, the *Kingdom of GOD*, or of *Jesu*-*ven*, means much the same with the professing *Church of Christ*, during its Settlement in this *imperfect State*: As it undoubtedly does, when *Christ* threatens his Hearers, that *the Kingdom of GOD should be taken away from them*<sup>e</sup>: And when he represents it, as consisting of *Good* and *Bad*<sup>f</sup>, of *Tares* and *Wheat*<sup>g</sup>; but declares, that at the last Day he *will gather out of his Kingdom all Things that offend, and them that do Iniquity*<sup>h</sup>; whereas nothing of that Kind shall ever enter into *the Kingdom of Glory*. But yet,

3. IT ultimately relates to “ the more  
“ perfect Form and State of this Society  
“ in the *Kingdom of Glory*.”

You very well know, that the Design of God in his Gospel, was not to establish a *Temporal Kingdom*, as the Jews expected; nor merely to form a *Body of Men*, who should live upon Earth with some peculiar Forms of Worship, under very excellent Rules, and with distinguished Privileges of a Spiritual Nature; but that all these ultimately referred to the *Invisible World*. Thither the *Son of Man* was removed, when

he

<sup>e</sup> Matt. xxi. 43.

<sup>f</sup> Matt. xiii. 48.

<sup>g</sup> Ver. 25.

<sup>h</sup> Ver. 41.

he had finished the Scenes of his Labour and Sufferings upon Earth ; and thither all the true and faithful *Members of the Kingdom* were sooner or later to be brought, and there were to have their final Settlement, and everlasting Abode, in a far more splendid and happy State, than the greatest Monarch on Earth has ever known : They shall *there*, as the *Apostle* most properly expresses it, *reign in Life by Jesus Christ*<sup>i</sup>. Now as the *Kingdom of GOD upon Earth* is to be considered with a leading View to *this* ; so we sometimes find, that *this glorious State* of its Members, or (which will come much to the same Thing,) *the Society of the Faithful* in this glorious State, is, by way of Eminence, called *the Kingdom of GOD* : And with regard to *this*, they whose Characters are such that they shall be *excluded* from thence, are represented as having *no Part in the Kingdom of Heaven*, tho' they have been by *Profession* Members of the *Church of Christ* on Earth. Of this you have a remarkable Instance, where *our Lord* says, *Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; but he that doth the Will of my Father which is in Heaven*<sup>k</sup> : Now it was *calling Christ Lord*, or professing a Regard to him as a Divine Teacher and Governor, which was the

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very Circumstance, that distinguished the Members of his *Kingdom on Earth*, from the rest of Mankind: Yet as they who do this insincerely, shall be *excluded*, from final Glory, it is said, *they shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven*.—So also the Apostle tells us, that *Flesh and Blood*, i. e. such gross Machines of Animal Nature as those in which we now dwell, *cannot inherit the Kingdom of GOD*<sup>1</sup>; they cannot dwell in so pure a Region; and therefore it is necessary, that before they enter upon it, those who are found *alive* at the illustrious Day of Christ's Appearance, should undergo a miraculous Change, to fit them for such an Abode.—In Reference to this we are likewise told, that *then*, i. e. at the great Resurrection-Day, *the Righteous shall shine forth as the Sun, in the Kingdom of their Father*<sup>m</sup>.—And this is what our Lord most certainly had in View, when he tells the impenitent Jews, that *there should be weeping and gnashing of Teeth, when they should see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the Prophets in the Kingdom of GOD, and they themselves thrust out*<sup>n</sup>: Which could not be meant of the Privileges of the Christian Church upon Earth, in which the Patriarchs had no Share; nor did the Jews at all envy those professing Christians, who most evidently had:

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. xv. 50. <sup>m</sup> Matt. xiii. 43. <sup>n</sup> Luke xiii. 28.

had : It must undoubtedly therefore be numbered among those Passages, in which *the Kingdom of Heaven* chiefly refers to *the State of Glory*. And I apprehend, the *Text* here before us may be added to that Catalogue ; which leads me to shew,

• [2.] WHAT we are to understand by  
*Seeing the Kingdom of GOD.*

Now in general you will easily apprehend, that to *see the Kingdom* is to *enjoy the Blessings of it*.—There is no Need of enumerating many Passages of Scripture, where *to see* properly signifies *to enjoy*. This is apparently the Sense of it, when Christ declares, *Blessed are the pure in Heart*; for they shall see *GOD*° : For the *Deity* cannot be the *Object of Sight*; but the Promise is, that such Souls, (Oh that we may be in their Number !) shall for ever *enjoy* the most delightful Communications from him. And thus again we are to understand it, where it is said, *What Man is he that desireth Life, and loveth many Days, that he may see*, i. e. that he may *enjoy Good*°? For otherwise, *to see it without enjoying it*, would be a great Aggravation of Misery and Distress. And in this Sense, it is most evident, that *seeing the Kingdom of GOD* must here be put,

for enjoying the chief and most important *Blessings* appropriated to this happy State ; because, as I have just been observing, *condemned Sinners* are represented in another Sense, as *seeing that Kingdom* and the glorified Saints in it ; but viewing it only at an unapproachable Distance, as a Spectacle that fills them with Horror and Despair.

THIS therefore is, upon the whole, the Meaning of this Passage : “ That no *Unregenerate Soul* shall finally have any Part in the *Glory and Happiness*, which *Christ* has prepared for his faithful Subjects ; nor can any that appear to be such, according to the Tenor and Constitution of the *Gospel*, be admitted into the Number even of *professing Christians*. ” It is true indeed, a Man may appear under such a *Disguise*, that those who are in this Sense the *Stewards of the Mysteries of GOD*<sup>1</sup>, may, in the Judgment of Charity, be obliged to think well of him, and to admit him : But *Christ*, who intimately knows him, does even now discern him. The present External Privileges he enjoys, are such, as he has no just Right to ; and in a little Time, *Christ* will root him out of this *Kingdom* with a Vengeance, and he shall be openly declared a *Rebel*, and one whom the *Lord* of it never knew, or ‘never approved’. So that upon the

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the whole, it is so little a Part that he had in ~~the~~ Kingdom, and that for so short a Time, that it may, in the free Language of Scripture, be said, that he has *never seen the Kingdom of GOD* at all; that he has *neither Part nor Lot in this Matter*, has no Part with God's Chosen, nor any *Lot with his Inheritance*.

HAVING thus largely explained the Meaning of *this Phrase*, I now proceed,

II. To shew you, how *certain* this Declaration of our Lord in the Text is, or how *absolutely impossible* it is, that *any Unregenerate Man* should thus *see the Kingdom of G O D*.

Now this I shall argue,—partly “from the immutable Constitution of GOD, whose Kingdom it is;”—and partly “from the Nature of its Blessings, which are such, that no Unregenerate Man, while he continues in that State, can have any Fitness or Capacity to *enjoy them*.”

THE First of these Considerations is copious and important enough, to furnish out abundant Matter for the Remainder of *this Discourse*; and it will be difficult to dispatch it within these Limits.

[1.] THE Impossibility there is, that any  
• Unregenerate Man, should enter into the  
Kingdom of GOD, appears “from the  
“ immutable Constitution of that GOD,  
“ whose Kingdom it is.”

¶

THIS might be sufficiently argued, from the express and emphatical *Words* of our *Lord Jesus Christ* in the *Text*. For he bore his *Father's Commission*, to preach the *Gospel of the Kingdom*, to publish the *good News* of its Erection and Success, and likewise to declare its *Nature*, and the *Method of Admittance* into it. And he is himself the Great *Sovereign* of that *Kingdom*; and consequently cannot but perfectly, and beyond all Comparison with any other, know the Whole of its *Constitution*.—But God has repeated the Declaration by him, and by his other *Messengers* to the Children of Men, in different Ages, and under different Dispensations, in such a Manner as suited its infinite Importance.—And therefore, for the farther Illustration of the Argument, I shall enumerate a great Variety of *Scrip-tures* that speak the same Language; not so much aiming therein at the Speculative Proof of the Point, as attempting to impress the Consciences of my Hearers with a Sense of its Certainty; and humbly hoping that some of those *sharp-pointed Arrows*, which I am now drawing out of the *Quiver*,

of *GOD*, may, by the Direction of his Spirit, enter the Reins of some against whom they are levelled<sup>1</sup>, and convince them of the absolute Necessity of an entire Change in their Hearts, as well as thcir Lives, or of the Vanity of all those Hopes which they entertain, while that Change is wanting. And let me bespeak your Attention, not to the Conjectures or Reasonings of a frail mortal *Man*, but to the solemn Admonitions and Declarations of the Eternal *G O D*; and be assured, that in one Sense or another, his Word shall take hold on you, as it has done on Sinners of former Generations, either for Conviction, or Condemnation.

THAT I may not be confounded in the Multiplicity of my *Proofs*, I shall range them under these *Three distinct Heads*.—The Prophets of the Old Testament were commission-ed to make this Declaration:—It was re-newed by the Preaching, of Christ;—and was suppor-ted by the Testimony of the Apostles under the Inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

i. THE Prophets of the Old Testament were comissioned in effect to make this Declaration, that no Unregenerate Sinners should enter into the Kingdom of *G O D*.

WELL

<sup>1</sup> Lam. iii. 13.

WELL might our Lord say to Nicodemus, *Art thou a Teacher in Israel, and knowest not these Things*<sup>u</sup>? For to this in effect all the Prophets bear Witness, and it might be learned from almost every Page of their Writings. It is true, the particular Phrase of being *born again*, or *regenerated*, does not occur there; nor is it expressly said, that an *Unregenerate Man* shall not be admitted into *GOD's Kingdom*. But then the Prophets every where assert, what is *in effect* the same, that *no Wicked Man*, who does not heartily repent of his Sins, and turn from them to God, *must expect the Divine Favour*. Now if you consider what we mean by an *Unregenerate Man*, according to the Description I have given before, you will find it is just the same as an *Impenitent Sinner*: And if it be declared, that such are not to expect the Divine Favour, nay, that they must certainly prove the Objects of his Displeasure, this must certainly imply an *Exclusion from his Kingdom*, and must intend a great deal more than being *deprived of everlasting Happiness*. And thus you see, that *all those Scriptures*, which speak of the irreconcileable *Hatred of GOD against Sin*, and against all *Impenitent Sinners*, come in to do Service here, and are equivalent to the Declaration

<sup>u</sup> Ver. 10.

claration in the Text. And I may hereafter shew you, that there are many Scriptures in the Old Testament, which lead Men to consider *that Change*, said to be so necessary, as what must be effected by a Divine Operation on their Souls. But as that will more properly come in under a following Head, I shall at present content myself with selecting a few Scriptures, as a Specimen of many Hundreds more, in Proof of the main Point before us; and I beseech you, that you would endeavour to enter, not only into the Sense, but the Spirit of them.

You well know, that Unregenerate Sinners are Wicked Men; and of such it is said, *GOD is angry with the Wicked every Day*<sup>w</sup>; or *all the Day long*, as the Original imports. The Sinner lies down and rises up, goes out and comes in, under the Divine Displeasure; and tho' with great Patience GOD bears with him for a while, he is described as preparing his dreadful Artillery against him, to smite him even with a mortal Wound: So far will he be from admitting him into his Kingdom, that as it is there added, *If he turn not, he will whet his Sword; he has bent his Bow, and made it ready; he has also prepared for him the Instruments of Death*<sup>x</sup>. And in another Place, he describes the dreadful Consequence of that Preparation in most lively Terms:

<sup>w</sup> Psal. vii. 11.      <sup>x</sup> Ver. 12, 13.

*Terms: If I whet my glittering Sword, and my Hand take hold on Judgment, I will render Vengeance to mine Enemies, and will reward them that hate me: I will make mine Arrows drunk with Blood, and my Sword shall devour Flesh, from the Beginning of Revenges on the Enemy,* i. e. as soon as I begin this awful Work<sup>y</sup>. And elsewhere he compares the *Destruction* which he will bring upon Sinners at last, to that which he executed on *Sodom and Gomorrah*, when he scattered *Fire and Brimstone on their Habitations*, and reduced their pleasant Country to a burning Lake: *Upon the Wicked he will rain Snares, Fire and Brimstone, and an horrible Tempest: This will be the Portion of their Cup<sup>z</sup>; and oh, how unlike the State and Abode of those, who are the happy Subjects of his Kingdom!*

NONE of the *Prophets* speak in milder and more gentle Language to returning Penitents, than *Isaiah*; yet he declares, *There is no Peace, saith my GOD, to the Wicked*<sup>a</sup>. Yea, he does, as it were, call in the Concurrence of all who feared God, and who loved their Country, to echo back and enforce the Admonition: *Say ye to the Righteous, that it shall be well with him; but, on the other Hand, Woe to the Wicked, it shall be*

<sup>y</sup> Deut. xxxii. 41, 42.  
lvii. 21.

<sup>z</sup> Psal. xi. 6.

<sup>a</sup> Isai.

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be ill with him ; for the Reward of his Hands  
shall be given him <sup>b</sup>.

THE Enumeration would be endless ;  
and it would require more than the Time  
of a whole Discourse, only to *read over*, with-  
out any Comment or Remark, one Half of  
the *Passages*, which might properly be in-  
troduced on this Occasion. I will therefore  
only mention *Two* more, which tho' some  
of you may *hear* with Indifference, I con-  
fess I cannot *read* without a very sensible  
Inward Commotion.

THE one is that Passage in the *Mosaick Law*, where GOD directs his Servant to say,  
*If there be among you a Root that beareth Gall and Wormwood*, or any Unregenerate Soul,  
who when he hears the *Words of this Curse*,  
*shall bless himself in his Heart*, saying, *I shall have Peace, though I walk in the Imagination*  
*of mine Heart, to add Drunkenness to Thirst*,  
and run into one Debauchery and Sin after  
another : *The Lord will not spare him, but the Anger of the Lord, and his Jealousy, shall*  
*smoke and be inflamed against that Man* ;—  
*and the Lord shall separate him unto Evil,*  
*out of all the Tribes of Israel, according to*  
*all the Curses of the Covenant, that are writ-*  
*ten in the Book of the Law* <sup>c</sup>. There is a  
terrible *Emphasis*, of which we cannot but  
take Notice here : GOD declares, that if  
among

• <sup>b</sup> Isai. iii. 10, 11. • <sup>c</sup> Deut. xxix. 18,—21.

*among all the Thousands of Israel, there was but one such presumptuous Sinner, that thus flattered himself in the Way of his own Heart, he would make a terrible Example of him, and separate that one Man to Evil, out of Thousands and Ten Thousands of his faithful and obedient Servants.*

This therefore is a Passage full of apparent *Terror*: The other is indeed a Language of *Mercy*; but it contains a most awful *Insinuation*, which appears, as good *Archbishop Tillotson* expresses it, “like a Razor set in Oil, which wounds with so much “the keener Edge.” *As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no Pleasure in the Death of the Wicked, but that the Wicked turn from his Way and live; turn ye, turn ye from your Evil Ways; for why will ye die, O House of Israel?*<sup>4</sup> thereby plainly intimating, that notwithstanding all that Gentleness of the Divine Nature, which he expresses in a most tender Invitation, which he confirms even with the Solemnity of an *Oath*; yet, if Sinners did not turn from their *Evil Ways*, there was no Remedy, but they must die for it.

AND how, Sirs, will any of you that continue in an *Unregenerate State*, arm yourselves against these *Terrors*? Is it by saying, “that these are the *Thunders of Mount Sinai*;

<sup>4</sup> *Ezek. xxxiii. 11.*

“ Sinai ; that these are *Denunciations* of the  
 “ *Old Testament* ; whereas the *New* speaks  
 “ in milder *Language?*” You may easily  
 “ know the contrary ; and to this Purpose I  
 am farther to shew you,

2. THAT this *Declaration* was renewed  
 .      by the Preaching of Christ.

IT is true indeed, that *Grace and Truth*  
*came by Jesus Christ*: Yet all the Grace  
 and Gentleness of that Administration he  
 brought, did not contradict those awful  
*Treatnings*; nay, it obliged him to set  
 them in a stronger Light.—He presently re-  
 peats to *Nicodemus* what he had just before  
 asserted in the *Text*, and declares, *Verily,*  
*verily I say unto thee, Except a Man be born*  
*of Water, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter*  
*into the Kingdom of GOD*<sup>f</sup>; i. e. “ As he  
 “ must be *baptized with Water*, in Order  
 “ to a regular *Entrance* into the *Society* of  
 “ my *People*, so he must also be *sanctified*  
 “ and *transformed* by the *cleansing* and *re-*  
 “ *newing* Influences of the *Spirit*, signified  
 “ by the *Water* there used, or he can have  
 “ no Part in the *Blessings* which my *Gospel*  
 “ brings.”—And that this must produce an  
*Universal Change*, in the *Life* as well as the  
*Heart*, and a faithful *Subjection* to the *Will*  
 of

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*Heart*, and a faithful *Subjection* to the *Will*  
of

<sup>e</sup> John i. 17.

<sup>f</sup> John iii. 5.

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of GOD, without which no Profession will stand a Man in any stead, our Lord solemnly declares in the Conclusion of his incomparable Discourse on the Mount: *Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; but he that doth the Will of my Father who is in Heaven: Many will say to me in that Day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy Name, and in thy Name cast out Devils, and in thy Name done many wonderful Works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from me, ye that work Iniquity<sup>g</sup>.* And shall you, Sirs, merely, for having a Name and Place in his House, escape; when those that have preached his Gospel, and wrought Miracles in Confirmation of it, when those that personally conversed with Christ, and those that ministered unto him, shall perish, if destitute of a holy Temper of Heart, and of its solid Fruit in their Lives? — Has not our Lord expressly said, that *he will gather out of his Kingdom all Things that offend, and them that do Iniquity; and will cast them into a Furnace of Fire; there shall be wailing and gnashing of Teeth<sup>h</sup>*? — Nay, in his infinite Compassion he has given to Sinners, as it were, a Copy of the Sentence, that will another Day be pronounced upon them; that they may meditate

<sup>g</sup> Matt. vii. 21, 22, 23. • <sup>h</sup> Matt. xiii. 41, 42.

meditate upon it, and review it, and judge whether they can bear the Terror of its Execution: Hear it attentively, and then say whether *Unregenerate Sinners* shall enter into his Kingdom. The dreadful Doom is this; *Depart from me, ye Cursed, into everlasting Fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels*<sup>1</sup>. And what now will you say to this? Can any Soul of you imagine, that *the Lord Jesus Christ did not know* what would pass in this Day, in which he is appointed to preside? or that *knowing it*, and knowing it would be something *different from this*, he would, on any Consideration whatsoever, make a false Representation, and lay so much Stress upon it? Yet *one or other* of these Things, you must secretly imagine; or must own, that every *Unregenerate Sinner*, and you among the rest, must not only be excluded from his Presence, but be condemned to suffer all the Fury of his Wrath, in Company with *Devils and damned Spirits*, in final Darkness, and everlasting Burnings. It only remains, that I shew you,

3. THAT the same Testimony was renewed by the *Apostles*, under the Influences of the *Holy Spirit*.

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xxv. 41.

You know, that they were authorized by their Great Master, to declare, in an authentick Manner, the *Constitution* of his *Kingdom*; and that *he who despise's them, despise's Christ*<sup>k</sup>. Now I would fain persuade you all, to consider this Argument as it lies in *Scripture*; to read over the *Epistolary Parts* of the *New Testament*, in this View, to observe what Encouragement they any of them give to an *Unregenerate Sinner*, to expect any Part in the *Kingdom of Heaven*. In the mean Time, permit me to present you with a few *Texts*, as a *Specimen* of the rest.

THE Apostle *Paul*, in his *Epistle to the Romans*, does indeed speak of *God's justifying the Ungodly*<sup>l</sup>; but lest any should vainly imagine that he encourages the *Hope* of those that continue so, he expressly tells us in the very same *Epistle*, that *the Wrath of GOD is revealed from Heaven against all Ungodliness and Unrighteousness of Men<sup>m</sup>*; and that e'er long *this Wrath* shall be executed, even in *the Day of the more ample Revelation of the righteous Judgment of GOD*; *who will render to every Man according to his Deeds*:— *to them that do not obey the Truth, but obey Unrighteousness*, (which is the Character of every *Unregenerate Sinner*,) *Indignation*

<sup>k</sup> Luke x. 16.

<sup>l</sup> Rom. iv. 5.

<sup>m</sup> Rom. i. 18.

*nation and Wrath; Tribulation and Anguish upon every Soul of Man that doth Evil, of the few first*, as having had the most signal Advantages, tho' Advantages inferior to yours, *and also of the Gentile<sup>a</sup>*. And farther he assures us, *that to be carnally minded, is Death*; and that the *Carnal Mind*, which universally prevails in Men, till by regenerating Grace they are made Spiritual, *is Enmity against GOD, and is not subject to the Law of GOD, neither indeed can be<sup>b</sup>*.—In another Epistle, he mentions it as a First Principle, in which, it might rationally be supposed, no Christian was uninstructed; *Know ye not, says he, that the Unrighteous shall not inherit the Kingdom of GOD<sup>c</sup>*?—And elsewhere he declares, that all External Modes of Religion, separate from that *entire Change* of Soul which I have described, are worthless and vain: *In Christ Jesus, says he, or to those that desire any Part in him and his Kingdom, neither Circumcision availeth anything, nor Uncircumcision, but a New Creature<sup>d</sup>*.—He likewise tells us to this Purpose, in another Place, that his *Grace, which has appeared unto all Men, teaches us to deny Ungodliness and Worldly Lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present World*; and yet after all to acknowledge,

K 2                    that

—<sup>a</sup> Rom. ii. 5, 6, 8, 9.   <sup>b</sup> Rom. viii. 6, 7.   <sup>c</sup> 1 Cor. vii. 9.   <sup>d</sup> Gal. vi. 15. • Tit. ii. 11, 12.

that it is *not by Works of Righteousness, which we have done, but according to his Mercy he saves us, by the washing of Regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he has shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour*<sup>1</sup>.—And without Holiness, which is the Effect of these Sacred Operations upon the Soul, he expressly tells us in another Place, that *no Man shall see the Lord*<sup>2</sup>.—And to alledge but one more Passage from him; As it is evident, that all Unregenerate Sinners, and only they, are ignorant of God, and disobedient to the Gospel; he solemnly assures us, that instead of receiving such at last into his Kingdom, *the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from Heaven, with his mighty Angels, in flaming Fire, taking Vengeance on them that know not GOD, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall be punished with everlasting Destruction from the Presence of the Lord, and from the Glory of his Power*<sup>3</sup>.—This is the Testimony of the Apostle Paul in his own emphatical Words, zealous as he was for the Doctrine of Free Grace, which such Declarations as these do not in the least Degree contradict.

LET us now hear *his Brethren*, the other Apostles of the Lord.—James urges Sinners, if

<sup>1</sup> Tit. iii. 5, 6.  
i. 7, 8, 9.

<sup>2</sup> Heb. xii. 14.

<sup>3</sup> 2 Thes.

if they ever desire to draw nigh to GOD,  
 and to have him draw nigh to them, to  
 cleanse their Hands and purify their Hearts<sup>w</sup>.  
 And yet more expressly he says, when he  
 speaks of those, who should receive the Crown  
 of Life, which the Lord hath promised to them  
 that love him; Of his own Will begat he us  
 with the Word of Truth, that we should be a  
 Kind of First-fruits of his Creatures<sup>x</sup>.—The  
 Apostle Peter describes Christians, as those  
 whose Souls were purified in obeying the Truth  
 through the Spirit, being born again, not of  
 corruptible Seed, but of incorruptible<sup>y</sup>; and  
 as those, who were made Partakers of the  
 Divine Nature, having escaped the Corrup-  
 tion that is in the World through Lust<sup>z</sup>?—  
 Again, John the beloved Disciple tells us,  
 that every one that doth Righteousness, is born  
 of GOD<sup>a</sup>; but he that committeth Sin, is of  
 the Devil<sup>b</sup>: And that every one that has a  
 well-grounded Hope of being like Christ, and  
 seeing him as he is, when he appears, puri-  
 fies himself, even as he is pure<sup>c</sup>.—And once  
 more, the Apostle Jude, as he describes  
 those who are sensual, and have not the Spi-  
 rit, as Men, that, if they were saved at all,  
 must be plucked out of the Fire<sup>d</sup>; so he  
 echo's back that awful Prophecy, which

K 3

*Enoch*

<sup>w</sup> Jam. iv. 8.      <sup>x</sup> Jam. i. 12, 18.      <sup>y</sup> 1 Pet. i.

<sup>z</sup> 2 Pet. i. 4.      <sup>a</sup> 1 John ii. 29.      <sup>b</sup> 1 John  
 iii. 8.      <sup>c</sup> 1 John iii. 2, 3.      <sup>d</sup> Jude, ver. 19, 23.

*Enoch had so long since delivered, that the Lord will come with ten thousand of his Spirits, to execute Judgment upon all, and to convict all that are Ungodly, of all those ungodly Deeds and Words, by which they have violated his Law.*

¶

THIS then appears, from the whole Tenor of the *Scriptures*, to be the Positive and Immutable Constitution of the great GOD, “ that none who are *Unregenerate*, shall be admitted to enjoy the *Happiness of Heaven*.” And from the View that we have taken of the Sacred Writings it is manifest, that this *in every Age* has been the Language of the Word of GOD ; and *under every Dispensation* we have sufficient Evidence of this important Truth. This is the Doctrine of the *Old Testament* ; and many are the Passages that I have offered from the *Law of Moses*, and from the *Prophets*, and the *Psalms*, that shew it is *impossible* an Unrenewed Soul should enter into *Heaven*. And the same also is asserted in the strongest Terms in the *New Testament* ; and when *Christ* came to set the *Gospel of the Kingdom* in a clearer Light, the Purport of the Declaration that he makes to *Nicodemus* in the *Text*, was frequently repeated by him in the Course of his Preaching, and represented as, the Rule

he

• he would regard at the Last Day. And the inspired Apostles speak the same Thing with an united Voice, and testify at large in their Epistles, that it is absolutely necessary we should be born again, if ever we would hope to see the Kingdom of GOD.

• So that now, Sirs, I may say, Call, if there be any that will answer; and to which of the Saints will you turn<sup>f</sup>, to encourage your vain and presumptuous Hope, of finding your Lot among GOD's People in the Kingdom of Glory, if you are Strangers to that important and universal Change, which we before described as Regeneration in the Scripture Sense of the Word? The Prophets under the Old Testament, and Christ, and his Apostles under the New, concur, in all the Variety of the most awful Language, to expose so presumptuous a Hope. And is it not audacious Madness in any, to venture their Souls upon it? Thus you would undoubtedly judge of any Man, who should strike a Dagger into his Breast, or discharge a Pistol at his Head, on this Presumption, that the Almighty Power of GOD could prevent his Death, tho' the Heart or the Brain were pierced. But it is much greater Folly, for a Man, while he continues in an Unregenerate State, to promise himself a Part in the King-

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dom of Heaven. For tho' there would be no Reason in the World to expect a ~~mira-~~  
~~cous~~ *Interposition*, to save a Life which a Man was so resolutely bent to destroy ; yet none can say, that such an *Interposition* would contradict any of the express Engagements of GOD's Word ; whereas to admit an *Unrege-  
nerate* Sinner into the Regions of Glory, would be violating, not *this* or *that* single Declaration, but the whole Series and Tenor of it : And we shall farther shew, in the next Discourse, that it would also be, in effect, altering the very *Nature* of the Heavenly Kingdom itself, as well as its *Constitu-  
tion*. Now what *Hope* can be more *despe-  
rate*, than that which can have no Support, but in the Subversion of the *Redeemer's King-  
dom*, and even of the Eternal Throne of GOD, the Foundations of which are *Righ-  
teousness* and *Truth* !       "





## S E R M O N V.

Of the INCAPACITY of an UNREGENERATE Person for relishing the Enjoyments of the Heavenly World.

---

JOHN iii. 3.

*-Except a Man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of GOD.*

**I**N order to demonstrate the *Necessity* of *Regeneration*, of which I would fain convince, not only your Understandings, but your Consciences, I am now proving to you, that *without it* it is *impossible* to enter into the *Kingdom of GOD*: And how *weighty* a *Consideration* that is, I am afterwards to represent.

THAT it is thus *impossible*, the Words in the *Text* do indeed sufficiently prove: But for the farther Illustration of the Subject, I have proposed to consider it under *Two distinct Views.*

I HAVE

I HAVE already shewn, it is impossible, because “the Constitution of the Kingdom of Heaven is such, that GOD has solemnly declared, and this under different Dispensations, and more or less plainly in all Ages of his Church, that no Unregenerate Person, i. e. no Impenitent Sinner, shall have any Part in it.” And I am now further to shew,

[2.] THAT “the Nature of the Future Happiness (which is here chiefly signified by the Kingdom of GOD,) is such, that an Unregenerate Person would be incapable of relishing it, even upon a Supposition of his being admitted into it.”

THIS is a Thought of so great Importance, and so seldom represented in its full Strength, that I shall at present confine my Discourse entirely to it.

I KNOW, Sinners, it will be one of the most difficult Things in the World, to bring you to a serious Persuasion of this Truth. You think *Heaven* is so lovely, and so glorious a Place, that if you could possibly get an Admittance thither, you should certainly be happy. But I would now set myself, if possible, to convince you, that this is a rash and ill-grounded Persuasion; and that on the

SER. 5. no Relish for Heaven, if there. 139  
the contrary, if you were now in the Re-  
gions of Glory, and in the Society of those  
blest Inhabitants, *that unrenewed Nature*,  
*and unsanctified Heart* of yours, would give  
you a *Disrelish* for all the sublimest Enter-  
tainments of that blissful Place, and turn  
*Heaven* itself into a Kind of *Hell* to you.

Now for the Demonstration of this, it is  
only necessary for you, seriously to consider  
“ what a Kind of *Happiness* that of *Heaven*  
“ is, as it is represented to us *in the Word*  
“ *of GOD*;” for from thence undoubtedly  
we are to take our Notions of it.

You might, to be sure, sit down, and  
imagine a *Happiness* to yourselves, which  
would perfectly suit your Degenerate Taste;  
a *Happiness*, which the more entirely you  
were enslaved to Flesh and Sense, the more  
exquisitely you would be able to enter in-  
to it. If God would assign you a Region  
in that beautiful World, where you should  
dwell in fine Houses, magnificently fur-  
nished, and gayly adorncd; where the most  
harmonious Musick should sooth your Ear,  
and delicious Food and generous Wines, in  
a rich Variety, should regale your Taste:  
If he should give you a splendid Retinue of  
People, to careſs and attend you, offering  
you their humbleſt Services, and acknow-  
ledging the most ſervile Dependance upon  
your

your Favour : Especially, if with all this he should furnish you with a Set of Companions, just of your own Temper and Disposition, with whom you might spend what Proportion of your Time you pleased, in Gaming and Jollity, in Riot and Debawchery, without any Interruption from the Reproof, or even the Example of the Children of GOD, or from Indispositions of Body, or Remorse of Conscience : This you would be ready to call *Life*, and *Happiness* indeed : And if the great Disposer of all Things were but to add *Perpetuity* to such a Situation, you would not envy Persons of a more refined Taste the *Heaven* you lost, for such a *Paradise* as this.

SUCH indeed was the *Happiness*, which *Mabomet* promised to his Followers : Flowery Shades, and gay Dresses, luxurious Fare, and beautiful Women, are described with all the Pomp of Language in almost every Page of his *Alcoran*, as the glorious and charming *Rewards*, which were to be bestowed on the Faithful after the Resurrection. And if this were the *Felicity* which the *Gospel* promised, *Extortioners* and *Idolaters*, *Whoremongers* and *Drunkards*, would be much fitter to inherit the *Kingdom of GOD*, than the most pious and mortified *Saint* that ever appeared upon Earth. But here, as almost every where else, the *Bible* and the *Alcoran* speak

~~speak~~ a very different Language ; and far from leading us into such *gross* and *ensual* Expectations, our Lord *Jesus Christ* has told us, that *the Children of the Resurrection neither marry, nor are given in Marriage*; but are like the *Angels of GOD in Heaven*<sup>4</sup>, and enjoy such *pure* and *spiritual Delights*, as are suited to such holy and excellent Creatures.

IT is true, that in the Book of *Revelations*, stately Palaces and shining Habits, delicious Fruit and harmonious Musick, are all mentioned, as contributing to the *Happiness* of those, who have the Honour to inhabit the *New Jerusalem*. But then the Style of that obscure and prophetical Book naturally leads us, to consider these merely as *Figurative Phrases*, which are made use of to express the *Happiness* that Divine Wisdom and Love has prepared for the Righteous, in a Manner accommodated to the Weakness of our Conceptions : Or at least, if in any of these Respects Provision be made for the Entertainment of a *glorified Body*, whatever its Methods of Sensation and Perception may be, all will be temperate and regular : And after all, this is even there represented, but as the least considerable Part of our *Happiness*, the Height of which is made to consist in the most elevated Strains of Devotion, and in an entire and everlasting

<sup>4</sup> Matth. xxii. 30.

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lasting Devotedness to the Service of *GOD*  
and of *the Lamb.*

LET us therefore immediately proceed to settle the Point in Question, by a more particular Survey of the several Branches of the *Celestial Felicity*; as represented to us in the *Word of GOD*: And from thence it will undeniably appear, that were an *Unregenerate* Soul in the same Place with the Blessed, and surrounded with the same External Circumstances, the Temper of his Mind would not by any Means allow him to participate of their *Happiness*. For it is plain, the *Scripture* represents the *Happiness of Heaven*, as consisting,—in the *Perfection* of our Minds in *Knowledge* and *Holiness*;—in the *Sight* and *Service* of the ever-blessed *GOD*,—in beholding the *Glory* of our exalted *Redeemer*;—and enjoying the *Society* of glorious *Angels* and perfected *Saints*,—throughout an endless *Eternity*.—Now, Sinners, it is *impossible*, you should enter into any such *Delights* as these, while you continue in an *Unregenerate State.*

1. ONE very considerable Part of the *Happiness of Heaven* consists, “ in that “ *Perfection* of *Knowledge* and *Holiness*, “ to which the Blessed shall be there “ exalted;” in which the *Unregenerate* Soul can have no Pleasure.

THU

~~Men~~ Thus we are told, that *the Spirits of Just Men* shall there be made perfect<sup>b</sup>; for nothing that defiles, as every Degree of Moral Imperfection does, shall enter into the New Jerusalem<sup>c</sup>. An Old Testament Saint conceived of Future Happiness, as consisting in being satisfied with the Likeness of GOD<sup>d</sup>: A Character, that is manifestly most agreeable to the View of it, which the beloved Disciple gives us, where he says, that when Christ shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is<sup>e</sup>; which must certainly refer to the Glories of the Mind, which are of infinitely greater Importance, than the highest imaginable Beauty and Ornament, that can be put upon the Corporeal Part of our Nature in its most illustrious State.

Now from this Perfection of Holiness, which shall then be wrought in the Soul, there will naturally arise an unspeakable Complacency and Joy, something resembling that, which the blessed God himself possesses, in the Survey of the infinite and unspotted Rectitude of his own most holy Nature. And in Proportion to the Degree, in which the Eyes of our Understandings are enlightened to

<sup>b</sup> Heb. xiii. 23. <sup>c</sup> Rev. xxi. 27. <sup>d</sup> Psal. xvii. 15.

<sup>e</sup> 1 John iii. 2.

to discern wherein true Excellency consist<sup>s</sup>. will the Soul be delighted in the Confusenes of such considerable Degrees of it in itself.

BUT surely it will be superfluous for me, to undertake to demonstrate, that an *Unregenerate* Soul can have no Part in this *Divine Pleasure*, which implies the compleat *Renewal of the Mind* as its very Foundation. For to imagine that he might, would be supposing him *Regenerate*, and *Unregenerate* at the same Time. As *Mr. Baxter* very well expresses it, “ The *Happiness* of “ Heaven is *Holiness*; and to talk of being “ happy without it, is as apparent Insense, “ as to talk of being well without Health, “ or being saved without Salvation.”

I WOULD only add on this Head, That the highest Improvement of our Intellectual Faculties could not make us *Happy*, without such a *Change* in the *Affections* and the *Will*, as I have before described under the former *General Head*. For the more clear and distinct the *Knowledge* of true Excellence and Perfection is, the greater would be your Anguish and Horror, to see and feel yourselves entirely destitute of it; and it is exceeding probable, that Spirits of the most elevated Genius have the keenest Sensation of that Infamy and Misery, which is inseparable.

~~•rable from the Prevalence of Sinful Dispositions in such Minds as these.~~

2. ANOTHER very considerable Branch of the *Celestial Happiness*, is that which arises “ from the *Contemplation* and “ *Enjoyment* of the ever blessed GOD;” but of this likewise an *Unregenerate Sinner* is incapable.

As our own Reason assures us, that *GOD* is the greatest and best of Beings, and the most deserving Object of our Enquiries and Regards, one would think it would naturally lead us to imagine, that the *Perfection* and *Happiness* of the Human Soul consists in the *Knowledge* and *Enjoyment* of him; and that when it arrives at the Seat of compleat *Felicity*, it must intimately *know him*, and *converse with him*. And in this View, I have sometimes been surprized, that Men of such distinguish'd Abilities, as some of the *Heathen Poets* and *Philosophers* appear to have been, should have had no greater Regard to the *Supream Being* in the Descriptions which they give us of the *Future Happiness*. That Sort of Friendship for them, which an Acquaintance with their Writings must give to a Person of any Relish for the Beauties of Composition, makes one almost unwilling to expose the low and despicable Ideas,

146 *The Happiness of Heaven consists* SER. 5.  
Ideas, which they often give of the State of their greatest *Heroes* in the Regions of Immortality.—But *the Word of GOD* speaks a very different Language. Our Lord represents the *Rewards* to be bestowed on the *pure in Heart*, by telling us, that *they shall see*, i. e. contemplate and enjoy *GOD*<sup>f</sup>: And virtuous Souls, who *overcome* the Temptations with which they are here surrounded, shall be *made* as *Pillars in the House of their GOD*, and *shall go no more out*<sup>g</sup>: And it is else-where said, that *his Servants shall serve him, and shall see his Face*<sup>h</sup>. And David's Views under a darker Dispensation rose to such a Degree of Refined, as to say, *As for me, I shall behold thy Face in Righteousness*<sup>i</sup>; which he mentions as a *Felicity* infinitely superior to all the Delights of the most prosperous Sinner.

BUT now, Sinners, it is utterly *impossible*, that while you continue in an *Unregenerate State*, you should *behold the Face of GOD* with Pleasure. The unutterable *Delight*, which the blessed Inhabitants of *Heaven* find in it, arises not merely from the abstract Ideas of his Essential Perfections, but from a *Sense of his Favour* and Love to them. It is *this* that gives a Relish to the whole

<sup>f</sup> Matt. v. 8.      <sup>g</sup> Rev. iii. 12.      <sup>h</sup> Rev. xxii.

3, 4.      <sup>i</sup> Psal. xvii. 15.

~~which~~ Survey, and rejoices the Heart of all the Saints, both *in Heaven*, and *on Earth*. He is a *GOD* of awful Majesty and irresistible Power, of infinite Wisdom and unspotted Holiness, of unerring Justice, invariable Fidelity, and inexhaustible Goodness; and *this GOD is our GOD, he will be our Guide, and our Portion for ever*<sup>k</sup>. And were it not for this View, let a Creature *think of GOD* with ever so much Spirit and Propriety, he must *think of him, and be troubled*<sup>l</sup>; yea, he must be filled with unutterable Horror and Confusion, as the *Devil* is, at the Thought<sup>j</sup> of an infinitely perfect Being, in whom he has *no Interest*, from whom he has *nothing friendly* to expect; and if *nothing friendly*, then every Thing *dreadful*.

Now it is certain, Sinners, that while you continue in an *Unregenerate State*, under the Influence of that *Carnal Mind*, which is *Enmity against GOD*<sup>m</sup>, and full of unconquerable Rebellion against his Law, there can be no Foundation for a *Friendship* between him and your Souls; nor for any Persuasion, or any Apprehension, of your *Interest* in his *Favour* and *Love*. *Friendship*, you know, supposes something of a Similitude of Nature and Sentiment; for as *GOD* himself argues, *How can Two walk together, except*

<sup>k</sup> Psal. xlviii. 14. lxxiii. 26.      <sup>l</sup> Psal. lxxvii. 3.  
<sup>m</sup> Rom. viii. 7.

148 *The Unregenerate are unable* SER. 5.  
they be agreed<sup>n</sup>? Now I have before ob-  
served to you at large, that *GOD*, being  
of purer Eyes than to behold Evil<sup>o</sup>, must ne-  
cessarily hate all the Workers of Injustice: The  
Foolish therefore shall not stand in his Sight<sup>r</sup>,  
or shall not be admitted to such a Situation:  
Nor would they indeed be able to endure  
it.—Let Conscience judge, what Satisfaction  
you could find in the *Presence of a GOD*,  
that you knew scorn'd and hated you, even  
while he suffered you to continue among  
the Crowd of his Children and Servants.  
The more lively Ideas you had of the Beauty  
and Perfection of the Divine Nature, the  
more you must loath yourselves, for being so  
unlike him, and so abominable to him:  
And what *Pleasure* do you think consistent,  
with such *Self-Contempt* and *Abhorrence*?  
Or rather, would not the wretched Degene-  
racy of your Nature lead you another Way;  
and a Kind of unconquerable *Self-Love*,  
joined even with this Consciousness of De-  
formity and Vileness, lead you to hate *GOD*  
himself? It is described as the fatal Effect of  
prevailing Wickedness in the Heart, *My*  
*Soul loathed them, and their Soul also abhorred*  
*me*<sup>q</sup>. And thus would it probably work in  
you, and produce in your wretched Breasts  
a mortal *Hatred* against him, and an envious  
*Rage*

<sup>n</sup> Amos iii. 3.

<sup>o</sup> Hab. i. 13.

<sup>p</sup> Psal. v. 5.

<sup>q</sup> Zech. xi. 8.

• *Rage*, at the Thought of his perfect Happiness: A State of Mind, of all others that can be imagined, the most odious, and the most tormenting. • How, Sirs, could your Hearts, possessed with these Diabolical Passions, bear to see the Beams of his Glory surrounding you on every Side? How could you bear to hear the Songs and Adorations, that were continually addressed to his Throne; and to observe the humble Attendance of all the Hosts of Heaven about it, who perpetually reckon it their Honour and Happiness to be employed in Obedience to his Commands? Such a Sight of the Glory and Felicity of your Divine Enemy would make you, so far as your limited Nature was capable of it, miserable even in Proportion to the Degree in which He is happy. This was, no doubt, the Torment of the Devils, as soon as they had harboured a Thought of Hostility against GOD; and the Remembrance of that Glory in which they once saw him, and which they know he still invariably possesses, is surely an Everlasting Vexation to them; and it would be so to you, if you were within the Sight of it.

But further, the Blessed in Heaven find their Everlasting Entertainment "in the Service of GOD." They rest not Day and Night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord GOD

*Almighty*; i. e. they are continually employed, either in the immediate ~~Acts~~ of Devotion, or in other *Services*, in which they still maintain a *Devotional Temper*, and are breathing out their Souls in holy Affections, while their active Powers are employed in the Execution of his Commands. But as I have already shewn you, that while in an *Unregenerate State* you could have *no Sense* of his *Favour* to you; it is very apparent, that you could have *no Sentiments* of *Gratitude* and *Love* towards him. So that while *Angels* and glorified *Saints* were breathing out their Souls in the most delightful and rapturous *Praise*, you must keep a sullen Kind of *Silence*: Or, if it were possible that your *Harps* and *Voices* should sound as melodiously as theirs, it would be all *Ceremony* and *Show*; the *Music* of the *Heart* would be wanting; and you would look on all the External Forms of Service, but as a *tedious Task*, and count it your *Misfortune* that the Customs of the Place obliged you to attend them. You may the more easily apprehend and believe this, when you consider what little *Rish* you now have for those Solemnities of *Divine Worship*, in which sincere *Christians* have the most lively *Foretastes of Heaven*. You know in your own Consciences, that short  
and

and interrupted as our publick Services are, they are the *Burden* of your Lives. You know that you say, in your *Hearts* at least, *When will the Sabbath be past, and the New Moon be gone?*<sup>1</sup> Judge then, how insupportable it would be to you, to spend an *Everlasting Sabbath* thus. I question not, but to your wretched Spirits *Annihilation* would appear vastly preferable to an Eternal Existence so employed.

3. ANOTHER very considerable Branch of the *Happiness of Heaven*, is that which arises “ from the Sight of the Glory of an exalted *Redeemer* ;” but ~~for~~ this likewise no *Unconverted Sinner* can have *any Relish*.

THIS is a View of the *Future Happiness*, which *our Lord* gives us, when he *prays* for his People in those memorable Words, engraven, as I hope, upon many of our *Hearts*; *Father, I will that they whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my Glory which thou hast given me.*<sup>2</sup> And he elsewhere promises it, as the great Reward he would bestow upon his People; *If any Man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there also shall my Servant be.*<sup>3</sup> And agreeable to this, the Apostle

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*Paul represents it, as the transporting View in which he considered the Happiness of the Future World; I desire, says he, to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better*<sup>w</sup>; incomparably beyond any of the Enjoyments of the present World, which can come into Competition with it.—But for this Part of the Happiness of Angels, and of the Spirits of Just Men made perfect, it is also evident, that you, Sinners, can have no Relish.

THE Sight of Christ will afford holy Souls a transporting Delight, because they will regard it as the Glory of their Redeemer and their Friend, and as a Pledge and Security of their own Glory. But what Foundation can you, Sinners, find for such a joyful sympathy with Christ, and such a comfortable Conclusion with regard to yourselves? Such is the wretched Degeneracy of your Nature, that tho' Christ be indeed the chiefest among Ten Thousand, and altogether lovely<sup>x</sup>, being the Brightness of his Father's Glory, and the express Image of his Person<sup>y</sup>, possessed of every Divine Perfection and Excellence; yet you now slight and neglect him, and discern in him no Form nor Comeliness, for which he is to be desired<sup>z</sup>: And were you Unregenerate in Heaven, the same Principle would prevail. Now where there is no Love

<sup>w</sup> Phil. i. 23. <sup>x</sup> Cant. v. 10, 16. <sup>y</sup> Heb. i. 3.

<sup>z</sup> Isai. liii. 2.

*Love* to a Person, there can be *no Delight* in his Converse, nor any Pleasure in *his Happiness*. Nay, the *Contrariety* of your Nature to his, would rather occasion *Aversion* and *Terror*. You could not but know, that the blessed Jesus is *holy* and *undefiled*, and *separate from Sinners*<sup>a</sup>; that he abhors all *Moral Evil* to such a Degree, that he laid aside *all the Glory* and Entertainments of *Heaven*, that he might *destroy* the Interest of *Sin* in this World of ours, and might *purify* to himself *a peculiar People, zealous of good Works*<sup>b</sup>: And when you should recollect at the same Time *that Sinfulness* that continued to reign in your Hearts, and made you to *every good Work* *reprobate*<sup>c</sup>, you could not but know, that you must be *hateful to him*; and therefore could not but *fear*, lest his Almighty Power should be exercised for your Punishment and Destruction: And thus *your Terror* must rise, in Proportion to the sensible Evidence you had of his Dignity and Authority. In a Word, you would stand like *guilty Rebels* in the Presence-Chamber of their injured and displeased *Sovereign*: His Throne and his Scepter, his Robe and his Crown, his Courtiers and his Guards, though in themselves splendid and magnificent Objects, only serve to terrify and amaze

<sup>a</sup> Heb. vii. 26.<sup>b</sup> Tit. ii. 14.<sup>c</sup> Tit. i. 16.

154      *It consists in the Society*      SER. 5.  
amaze them, while they display the Grandeur and Power of their Enemy.

4. ANOTHER very considerable Branch, of the *Celestial Happiness*, will be “the “Society of Angels and glorified Saints;” but for this likewise an *Unregenerate Sinner* must be *unfit*.

You know, that when the *Apostle* speaks of our *Alliance* to the *Heavenly World*, he represents it as a *Social State*; where excellent Spirits dwell together, and converse with each other with mutual Esteem and Endearment: *Ye are come*, says he, *to the Heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable Company of Angels, to the general Assembly and Church of the First-born, which are written in Heaven, and to the Spirits of Just Men made perfect*<sup>a</sup>. It is *sitting down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, with all the Patriarchs and Prophets, all the Apostles and Martyrs, in the Kingdom of Heaven*<sup>c</sup>: And perhaps you think, you shall want nothing more to compleat your *Happiness*, than to be admitted to a Place among ~~them~~. But reflect a little more attentively upon the Circumstances of Things, and I am persuaded you will form a different Judgment.

THERE is no Reason to doubt, but that

at

<sup>a</sup> Heb. xii. 22, 23.

<sup>c</sup> Matt. viii. 11.

at your first Entrance into the Regions of Glory, you would be agreeably struck with the *View of those Inhabitants.* As for those Beauties of their Character, which consist in Love to God, and in Zeal for his Honour and Interest, it is certain, that you would be insensible of them, and pay but little Regard to them: But the *Humanity* and *Benevolence* of their *Temper* would, no doubt, render them agreeable to you; and so much the more, as Self-Love might lead you to expect some Personal Advantage by it. And it is more than possible, that you would be much prejudiced in their Favour, by those resplendent and attractive *Forms*, in which they appear; *Forms*, no doubt, far more beautiful and engaging, than any which the Children of Men ever saw upon Earth. On both these Accounts it might be natural enough for you, at first to address them with an Air of *Respect*, as Persons that you could be glad to be upon good Terms with, and in whose *Friendship* you could desire a Share.

BUT how do you think, that any such *Proposal* of *Friendship* would be received by an *Angel*, or a glorified *Saint*? No doubt, if there were any Prospect of converting you, or any Hope you might be brought to a devout and holy Temper, they would immediately become *Preachers of Righteousness* to

156 *The Unregenerate might admire*, SER. 5.  
to you ; and endeavour by the most rational,  
the most pathetick, and the most insinuating  
Address, to awaken and charm you to a  
Sense of *Religion*, and so to form you to a  
Capacity for *Happiness*. But they would  
know, that according to the eternal *Constitu-*  
*tion of G O D*, there could be no Room  
to entertain such an *Hope* ; but that being  
filthy, you must be filthy still : And therefore,  
as they would know you to be *incorrigible*,  
their Love to *G O D*, and their Concern to  
be approved and accepted by him, would  
prevent their forming any intimate *Friend-*  
*ship* with Persons, whose Natures were so  
contrary to *him*, and on whom he looked  
with such irreconcilable Abhorrence. And  
besides this, their own personal *Sanctity* of  
Character, would give them an *Aversion* to  
such corrupt and degenerate Creatures : So  
that how much so ever they might pity your  
Condition, they would turn away from you,  
as Objects, whose Presence and Converse  
were not to be endured.

AND do you not easily apprehend, that  
such a *Refusal* on their Part, would be both  
*shameful*, and very *provoking*, to you ? For  
which way could you bear it, to be thus re-  
jected and dishonoured, by the most excellent  
Part of the Creation ; by those, whom per-  
haps

haps you once intimately knew, and with whom you conversed upon equal Terms; nay, by many, who were once much your Inferiors, and whom perhaps, in the Pride of your Hearts, you would not condescend to regard? The natural Effect of this must surely be, that you would soon be proportionably displeased and *enraged* with the *Refusal*, as you were at first *charmed* at their *Appearance*: And when you saw that transporting *Pleasure* which they took in the Affection and Friendship of each other, and the Joy which the Divine Favour poured into their *Souls*, while you, in the very same Place, were excluded from these rich Entertainments, your Hearts would soon burn with *Envy* and *Indignation*; and as much as you before *admired them*, you upon this would come to *hate them*. And perhaps, *that Hatred* would put you upon some Attempt, to interrupt, or even, if it were possible, to destroy *that Happiness*, which you were not allowed to share. But then, when you saw them continually under the Divine Protection, and *compassed with his Favour*, as with a *Shield* ; so that your Malice could not reach them, all the Keeness and Rancour of your Spirit would recoil upon itself; you would fly from their *Presence*, as *insupportable*; and would be glad to retire

retire to some meaner Apartment, or to hide yourselves in the Shades of Darkness ; so that you might but get rid of the *Sight* of so many dazzling Objects, whose *Lustre*, instead of chearing your vitiated Eye, would pain and over-power it.

BUT if you should not be transported to this *Diabolical Excess*; if it were possible for you, to behold the *glorified Saints*, and to live among them, without these *envious* and *tormenting Passions*; yet surely you would *want a Relish* for the most entertaining Part of their *Conversations*: Had you indeed a good *Natural Genius*, which to be sure many *Unconverted Sinners* have, it ~~might~~ be very *agreeable* to hear them discoursing of the *Wonders of Nature*; and that *Curiosity*, which is, in some Measure, incident even to Persons of the *meanest Capacities*, would make it *pleasant* to hear them recount the important *History* relating to the *Revolutions* of the *Angelick World*, which we on this Earth are entirely Strangers to, or at least have been very little acquainted with them. But surely, the most delightful *Topics* of *Conversation*, which *Heaven* itself can furnish out, must be those which are *Religious* and *Divine*: the Infinite *Perfections* of the ever-blessed *GOD*; the *Personal Glories* and incomparable *Love* of his condescending, but exalted

exalted Son; and the *Sanctifying Operations* of the Blessed Spirit on the Soul, transforming it into the *Divine Image*, and making it meet for Eternal Glory. Yea, even when the *Blessed Spirits above* are handling *Philosophical or Historical Subjects*, they still consider them with a *Regard to GOD*, as his *Perfections* are displayed, and illustrated, in the *Works of his Hands*, and in the *Conduct of his Providence*. And here *their Pleasure* flows, not merely from a Set of *Rational Ideas*, which arise in their own Minds, or are suggested to them by others; but from the Exercise of those devout *Affections* upon the Blessed *GOD*, which are correspondent to the several *Subjects* of Discourse.

And can you, Sirs, who are alienated from the *Divine Life*<sup>h</sup>, and accustomed to live in a continual Neglect and Forgetfulness of the Great *Parent of Universal Nature*, can you relish such Subjects as these? You would, no doubt, be discontented, and uneasy, in such a Scene: • The Heavenly *Oratory* of this *holy Society* would have no *Charms* for you; but you would be longing for some of those vain and worthless Companions, which you were so fond of here upon Earth, to hear a merry Story, or a Song, or to join with them in the Pleasures of a Debauch.

5. AN-

• Ephes. iv. 18.

5. ANOTHER considerable Branch of the *Happiness of Heaven* arises “from the “assured Prospect of the *Everlasting Continuance* of this *Felicity*;” but, if an *Unregenerate Soul* could find any Entertainment at all in *Heaven*, he certainly could have no Ground for such an Expectation of its *Continuance*.

WHEN the Children of God on Earth think of the *Happiness of Heaven*, the Eternity of it makes a very deep Impression on their Hearts, and even swallows up their Souls with ardent Desire, and unutterable Joy: It raises their Esteem, and animates their Hope, while they reflect on that exceeding and eternal Weight of Glory<sup>i</sup>, that House not made with Hands, eternal in the Heavens<sup>k</sup>, and that Inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and which fadeth not away<sup>l</sup>.—And no doubt, but the Blessed in Heaven regard it in the same View, and all the Pleasures they enjoy are vastly increased by the Prospect of their endless Duration; so that by the Anticipation of an Eternity still to come, they do, as it were, every Moment enjoy an infinite Satisfaction.—But as for you, Sinners, while you are so ill tempered to the *Happiness of Heaven*, the Prospect

<sup>i</sup> 2 Cor. iv. 17.

<sup>k</sup> 2 Cor. v. 1.

<sup>l</sup> 1 Pet. i. 4.

Prospect of an *Eternal Abode* there would not, on the Principles I have laid down above, be a Prospect of *Eternal Happiness*, but rather, on the Whole, of *Eternal Un-easiness* to you.

BUT suffer me a little to discourse upon another *Supposition*; and let me now, for Argument sake, wave what I have been so long insisting upon, and *suppose*, that you could so far command the turbulent Passions of your own Heart, and so unite (as it were) the whole Powers of your Soul, to attend to the Beauty of Place, the Harmony of Musick, and whatever else may be supposed capable of regaling the Senses or the Imagination; as upon the whole to find *Heaven* a pleasing and *delightful Abode*, and to *wish*, that tho' some of its Entertainments were above your Taste and Capacity, yet you might be allowed an *Eternal Enjoyment* of the rest: Could there be any Room for you to *expect* a *perpetual Abode* in these Blissful Seats? No, Sinners, you would not be able so much as to *hope it*. The Good itself is so great, and *perpetual Enjoyment* even in any Degree has such a Kind of Infinite Value, that I know not how the purest and noblest Spirits in Heaven could absolutely have been secure of it, separate from the Engagement of a *Divine Promise*. And what

162 *The Unregenerate, if in Heaven, SER. 5.*  
what *Divine Promise* would you be able to have Recourse to, in such a Circumstance as we now suppose? Where could you find it in all the Book of *God*, that Persons of your Character should ever *enter into Heaven* at all, much less that you should *for ever* continue there? — You could have therefore no Security of the *Continuance* of your *Abode in Heaven*, if it were possible that you should *enter* on the Possession of it: But when you should consider the unsullied Holiness of the Ever-blessed *GOD*, the Sovereign of this Sacred Province, and the spotless Purity of that Gracious *Redeemer*, to whom the Government of it is committed, you could not but fear, that you should quickly be seized by the Hand of Vengeance, be hurl'd from the Battlements of Heaven, and plunged low into the Pit of Destruction. You know, this was the Condemnation of the *Rebel Angels*, and your Guilt compared with that dreadful Event, which makes so considerable a Scene of the History of Heaven, would, I doubt not, be sufficient to create Everlasting Jealousy and Uneasiness, and to turn every pleasurable Circumstance into a Source of Horror, in the Apprehensions of being depriv'd *eternally* of it.

Thus you see, Sirs, from a particular Survey of the various Lights in which  
*Heaven*

SER. 5. could not hope to remain there. 163

*Heaven* is represented, and of the various Branches of which its Happiness consists, an Unregenerate Sinner is incapable of it, even tho' we should suppose, that he was actually admitted to it. Let me intreat you to reflect on all these Things, and you will see the Reasonableness of that one Remark, with which I shall conclude my Discourse.

How vain are all those *Hopes of Heaven*,  
which in your present Condition you  
are ready to entertain !

I HAVE been proving at large, that if *GOD* were to admit you to the Possession of *Heaven*, which it is certain that he never will, you would be incapable of relishing the Enjoyments of it : Nay, that there would be a solid Foundation in your own Hearts, for many of the most tumultuous and disquieting Passions. Envy and Grief, Fear and Rage, those Roots of Bitterness, would spring up even in the *Paradise of GOD*, and turn the Fertility of that blessed Soil into their own Nourishment. And do you imagine, that any External Accommodations, or Ornaments, could make you easy and comfortable, under the Transports of such Hellish Passions ? What if you were to take a Man that was tormented with a violent Fit of the Stone or Gout, and to place him in a most delicious

164 *A great Change must be wrought* SER. 5.  
Garden, or in a Palace of Marble and Cedar, to set him on a Throne of Gold under a Canopy of Purple, to clothe him with Robes of Velvet and Embroidery, regaling him with the most delicious Fruits and generous Wines, and at the same Time soothing his Ear with all the Harmony of Sound, which the most melodious Symphony of Instruments and Voices could afford? Would all this Magnificence and Luxury make him insensible of *that Anguish* which was racking his *very Vitals*? Or would not *that Inward Torture* rather render him insensible of this Association of *pleasurable Impressions* from *without*? Yea, would it not incline him to suspect, that you intended all these pompous Preparations, only to deride and insult him? As little would *your distempered and unholy Souls* be capable of *relishing* the *Entertainments of Heaven*, while these *Entertainments*, and these *Souls* of yours, continue what they are at present.

THERE must be therefore *a Change*. And will you consider where that *Change* must be made? If you continue still in your present Character and Circumstances, there must be a vast *Change in Heaven itself*, before you can be *happy* in it. The whole Temper, Character, and Disposition of every *Saint* and *Angel* there, must be *changed* from what it now is, before they can be capable of

• of any friendly and complacential Conversation with you. Yea, our *Lord Jesus Christ*, who *is the same Yesterday, to Day, and for Ever*<sup>m</sup>, must divest himself of those *Beauties of Holiness*, which are infinitely dearer to him than any External Grandeur or Authority, before he can receive you *into his Kingdom*. Nay, the very *Father of Lights, with whom there is no Variableness, neither Shadow of Turning*<sup>n</sup>, must be entirely changed : He must lay aside that *Holiness*, which is Essential to his Nature, and which is the Brightness and Glory of it ; he must *love that* which he now *hates*, and be *indifferent to that* which he most affectionately *loves*, before he can open his Arms to you, and smile upon your Souls. And can you dare to *hope* for such an unaccountable, such an inconceivable *Revolution* as this ? No, Sirs, infinitely sooner would *God change Earth into Hell*, and bury you, and all of your Character, under the Ruins of *this World*, which you inhabit and pollute, than he would thus tarnish the *Beauties of Heaven*, and divest himself of the brightest Glory of his own Divinity. “*GOD,*” says *Archbishop Tillotson*, “ has condescended “ to take *our Nature* upon him, that he “ might make *us* capable of Happiness ; but “ if this will not do, he will not put off “ *his own Nature* to make *us* happy.”

WHAT then do you imagine ? Do you

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think, that GOD will prepare *some separate Apartments in Heaven*, furnished with a Variety of *Sensual Pleasure*, for the Entertainment of Persons of your Character? *Some Apartments*, from whence the Tokens of his Presence shall be withdrawn, from whence the Exercise of his Worship shall be banish'd, from whence Saints and Angels shall retire to make Way for those Inhabitants, who, like you, have finned themselves beyond a Capacity of enjoying GOD, or of being fit Companions for any of his most excellent Creatures? This were to suppose the Christian Religion false, and to contradict the Light of Natural Reason too, which not only shews such a Disposition of Things to be unworthy the Divine Sanctity and Majesty, but also shews, that if there be a Future State, it must be a State of Misery to Wicked Men, in whose Minds those Vicious Habits prevail, which are even now the Beginnings of Hell; which therefore they must carry along with them where-ever they are, in Proportion to the Degree in which they are predominant.

UPON the Whole then, you ~~must~~ evidently see, that it is absolutely necessary, that *you, Sinners, should be changed*, if ever you expect to have any Part or Lot in the Future Happiness. And when do you expect that Change should be wrought? Do you

• expect it, when *Death* has done its dreadful Office upon you, and your Soul arrives at the *Invisible World*? Is the *Air* of it (if I may be allow'd the Expression,) so refined, that it will immediately purify, and transform, every polluted Sinner that comes into it? You cannot but know, that the whole Tenor of Scripture forbids that presumptuous destructive *Hope*. It assures us, that *there is no Work, nor Device, nor Knowledge, nor Wisdom in the Grave*<sup>o</sup>; but that we must be judged, according to what ~~we~~ have done in the *Body*, and not according to what has past in any Separate State, whether the Actions we have done be good, or whether they be evil<sup>p</sup>.

If ever therefore you are *Regenerate* at all, it must be while you are here below, in this State of Education and Trial: And if you continue in your Sins till *Death* surprize you, your Souls will be for ever sealed up under an irreversible *Sentence*, and by the Decree of GOD, and the Constitution of Things, will be excluded from *Happiness*, as by no Means either entitled to it, or prepared for it: So evident is the Truth of this Assertion in the *Text*, that except a *Man* be born again, he cannot see the *Kingdom* of GOD.

AND will you then sit down contentedly under such a Conclusion as this, "I shall be

" excluded from this Kingdom, as accursed,  
 " and profane ? " Alas, Sirs, the Conclusion  
 is big with unutterable Terror and Death ;  
 as I should now proceed to shew you at  
 large, if my Time would allow : For I am  
 next to represent the infinite *Importance* of  
 entering into that *Kingdom*, and consequently  
 of that entire *Change* which has been proved  
 to be *necessary* to that *Entrance*. But I must  
 reserve that to the next Opportunity of this  
 Kind. In the mean Time let me add, that  
 I doubt not, but there are many present, who  
 have heard this Description of the *Heavenly*  
*World* with Delight, and who are saying in  
 their Hearts, " *This is my Rest for ever ;*  
 " *here will I dwell, for I have desired it* <sup>a</sup> :  
 " *This is the Felicity, to which my Heart*  
 " *aspires with the most ardent Breathing.*"  
 Such may with the utmost Reason regard it  
 as *a Token for good*, and may go on in a  
 cheerful Assurance, that the Grace that has  
*made them meet to be Partakers of the Inhe-*  
*ritance of the Saints in Light* <sup>b</sup>, will at length  
 conduct them to it, in perfect Safety, and  
 everlasting Triumph. Amen.

<sup>a</sup> Psal. cxxxii. 14.    <sup>b</sup> Col. i. 12.



## S E R M O N VI.

Of the IMPORTANCE of entering into the Kingdom of Heaven.

JOHN iii. 3.

—*Except a Man be born again,  
he cannot see the Kingdom of  
GOD.*

**H**OW impossible it is, that an *Unregenerate* Sinner should *see*, i. e. enjoy the *Kingdom of GOD*, or that future Blessedness to which the *Gospel* is intended to lead its Professors, I have shewn you at large. I have appealed to the *Testimony* of God's holy *Prophets*, and *Apostles*, in Concurrence with that of his *Incarnate Son*, to prove, that Persons of such a ~~Character~~ are, by the inviolable *Constitution* of that Kingdom, excluded from it. And I have farther, in my *last Discourse*, proved, that if they were actually admitted to it, they would be incapable

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pable of relishing its Pleasures ; that their  
vitiated Palate would have a *Distaste* to the  
choicest Fruits of the *Paradise of G O D* ;  
yea, that in these blissful Regions *Thorns*.  
and *Briars* would spring up in their Paths,  
and make them *wretched* in the very Seat of  
*Happiness.*

I DOUBT not, but you are in your Consciences generally convinced, that the *Truth* of these Things cannot be contested. You are inwardly persuaded, that it is indeed so ; and I fear, many of you have also Reason to apprehend, that you are of this unhappy Number, who are hitherto *Strangers* to *Regenerating Grace*. But how are your Minds *impressed* with this Apprehension ? Do I wrong you, Sirs, when I suspect, that some of them are hardly *impressed* at all ? Do I wrong you, when I suspect, there are those of you, who have spent the *last Week* with very little *Reflection* upon what you have heard ? The Cares and Amusements of Life have been pursued as before, and you have not taken *one Hour* to enter into the Thought with *Self-Application*, and seriously to consider, “ I am one of those, concerning whom Eternal Wisdom and Truth has pronounced, that, if they continue such as at present they are, they shall not see the Kingdom of G O D.” You have not paused at all upon the awful Thought ; you have not offer'd

I fer'd one lively Petition to GOD, to beg that you may be recovered from this unhappy State, and brought to a *Meetness* for his *Kingdom*, and a *Title* to it. For *your sakes* therefore, and for the *sakes of others* in your State, having already explained, illustrated, and confirmed the Proposition in my *Text*, I proceed,

III. To represent to you the *Importance* of the Argument suggested here; or to shew you, how much *every Unregenerate Sinner* ought to be *alarmed* to hear, that while he continues in his present State, *he cannot see the Kingdom of GOD.*

AND oh! that while I endeavour to illustrate this, my *Words* might enter into your Minds *as Goads*, and might fix there *as Nails fasten'd in a sure Place!* The Substance of my Argument is given forth by the one great *Shepherd*<sup>a</sup>; may the Prosecution of it be bleſſ'd, as the Means of reducing some *wandering Sheep* into his *Fold!*

Now in order to illustrate the Force of this Argument, I beseech you seriously to consider,—what *this Kingdom* is, from which you are in Danger of being for ever *excluded*;

<sup>a</sup> Eccles. xii. 11.

172 *The Excellency of this Kingdom* SER. 6.  
cluded ; —and, what will be the *Condition* of  
all those, who shall be *finally cut off* from  
any Interest in it.

[1.] CONSIDER, “ what *that Kingdom*  
“ is, from which the *Unregenerate*, or  
“ those who are not *born again*, shall  
“ be *excluded*. ”

AND here you are not to expect a *complacat Representation* of it : For *that* is an Attempt in which the Tongues of *Angels*, as well as *Men*, might fail ; or how proper soever their Language might be in itself, *to us* it would be unintelligible ; for *Eye hath not seen, nor Ear heard, neither have entered into the Heart of Man, the Things which GOD hath prepared for them that love him* <sup>b</sup>. And surely these final and most illustrious *Preparations of his Love* must, beyond all others, exceed our Description and Conception. A *Minister*, that, with the Apostle *Paul*, had been *caught up into the third Heaven*, if he would attempt to speak of the glorious Scenes which were there opened to him, must say, they were *unutterable Things* <sup>c</sup> : And one, that, *with John*, had *lain in the Bosom of Christ himself*, must say, as that *Apostle* did, *It does not yet appear what we shall be* <sup>d</sup>. And indeed, when we go about

to

<sup>b</sup> 1 Cor. ii. 9.    <sup>c</sup> 2 Cor. xii. 2, 4.    <sup>d</sup> 1 John iii. 2.

to discourse of it, I doubt not, but the blessed Angels pity the Weakness of our Apprehensions and Expressions, and know that we do but debase the Subject, when we attempt the most to exalt and adorn it.

• Y E T there are just and striking Representations of this *Kingdom* made in the *Word of GOD*; and we are there often told in general, wherein it shall consist. You no doubt remember, that I was, in the last of these *Lectures*, going over several important Views of it. I then told you, it will consist, in the *Perfection* of our Souls in *Knowledge* and *Holiness*; in the *Sight* of *GOD*, and our blessed *Redeemer*; in exercising the most delightful Affections towards them, and in being for ever employed in rendering them the most honourable Services; in conversing with *Saints* and glorious *Angels*; and in the assured Expectation of the *Eternal Continuance* of this Blessedness in all its Branches. That this is the *Scriptural Representation* of the Matter, I proved to you from many express *Testimonies* in the *Word of GOD*: And I doubt not, but you have often heard the Excellempy of each of these Views represented at large, in distinct Discourses on each.

I WILL not therefore now repeat what has been said upon such Occasions; but will rather direct you to some *General Considerations*,

Considerations, which may convince you of the Excellency of that State and World, from which, if you continue Unregenerate, you must for ever be excluded: For I would fain fix it upon your Minds, that it is in this Connection, and for this Purpose, that the Representation is made. And oh! that you might so review it, as no longer to neglect so great Salvation<sup>c</sup>, nor act as if you judged such Everlasting Life to be beneath your Attention, and unworthy your Care and Regard<sup>f</sup>! You cannot think it so, when you consider,—that it is represented in Scripture under the most magnificent Images;—that it is the State, which GOD has prepar'd for the Display of his Glory, and the Entertainment of his most favourite Creatures;— that it is the great Purchase of the Blood of his Eternal Son;— that it is the main Work of his Sacred Spirit to prepare Mens Hearts for it;—and the great Business of our inveterate Enemy the Devil, by all possible Means to prevent our obtaining it.—Each of these Considerations may much illustrate the Excellency of it, and all taken together yield a most convincing Demonstration.

i. CONSIDER, “ by what a Variety of  
“ beautiful and magnificent Images this  
“ Happy-

• Heb. ii. 3.      <sup>f</sup> Acts xiii., 46.

“ *Happiness is represented in the Word  
“ of GOD;*” and *that may convince  
you of its Excellency.*

WHEN the Blessed *GOD* himself would raise our Conceptions of *a State of Being*, so much *superior* to any Thing we have ever *seen* or *known*, unless he intended a *personal* and *miraculous Revelation* of it, he must borrow our *Language*, and in painting the *Glory of Heaven* must take his Colours from *Earth*. And here the Magnificence of *a City*, the Sweetness of *a Garden*, the solemn Pomp of *a Temple*, the Lustre of *a Crown*, and the Dignity of *a Kingdom*, strike powerfully on the Human Mind, and fill it with Veneration and Delight. But when such *Figures* as these are borrowed from *this low World of ours*, faintly to shadow out *that which is above*, there is always the *Addition* of some important *Circumstance*, to intimate how far the *Celestial Original* exceeds the brightest *Earthly Glory*, by which the Divine Condescension has vouchsafed to describe it.

THE Enumeration of a Variety of *Scrip-tural Descriptions* will set *these Remarks* in the strongest Light.—If therefore *Heaven* be described as *a City*, it is *the New Jeru-salem, the City of our GOD, that cometh down from GOD out of Heaven*: The Pavement

176      *Heaven is represented by*      SER. 6.  
ment of its Streets is all of pure Gold, its  
*Gates* are Pearl, and its Foundation Jewels<sup>h</sup>.—If it be a *Garden*, it is the *Paradise of GOD*<sup>i</sup>, and so far superior to that which he at first prepared and furnished out for the Entertainment of *Adam* in his *State of Innocence*, that it is planted on every Side with the *Tree of Life*<sup>k</sup>, of which there was but one alone in the *Garden of Eden*; and is watered, not with such common Rivers as the *Tigris* and *Euphrates*, but with that living, copious, inexhausted Stream, the *River of the Water of Life*, which proceeds from the *Throne of GOD*<sup>l</sup>, and gently glides along through all its Borders.—When it is represented as a *Temple*, we are told, that instead of a *Golden Ark* placed in the remotest Recess, to which only the *High Priest* might once a Year approach, and on which he might not be allowed to gaze, the *Throne of GOD* is erected there<sup>m</sup>, perpetually surrounded with *Myriads* of Worshippers, who see his Face, and like the *High Priest* when clothed in his richest Robes, have his Name written in their Foreheads<sup>n</sup>: Instead of the feeble Rays of that *Golden Candlestick*, whose Lamps shone in the *Holy Place*, the *Heavenly Temple* is illuminated in a more glorious Manner, and needs no *Candie*,

<sup>h</sup> Rev. xxi. 19, 21.    <sup>i</sup> Rev. ii. 7.    <sup>k</sup> Rev. xxii. 2.  
<sup>l</sup> Rev. xxii. 1.            <sup>m</sup> Rev. viii. 15.    <sup>n</sup> Rev. xxii. 4.

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*Candle, neither Light of the Sun; for the Glory of GOD continually enlightens it, and the Lamb is the Light thereof:* Nay, we are assured, that its *Sacred Ministers are made Kings as well as Priests unto GOD<sup>p</sup>;* and accordingly, being clothed in white Raiment, they have *Crowns of Gold on their Heads<sup>q</sup>;* as well as *Harps, and Golden Vials, or Censers full of Incense, in their Hands<sup>r</sup>:* And lest we should think, these pompous Services are only the Entertainment of some peculiarly *Sacred Seasons,* we are told, that *they rest not Day nor Night<sup>s</sup>,* adoring him that sits upon the Throne, and are fixed, as *Pillars in his Temple, to go out no more<sup>t</sup>.*—Again, if it be spoken of as *a Crown,* it is represented as *incorruptible<sup>u</sup>;* *a Crown of Glory, that fadeth not away<sup>v</sup>.*—And when it is called *a Kingdom,* the Scripture does not only add, as here in the Text, that it is *the Kingdom of GOD,* which must certainly exalt the Idea of it; but that it is *a Kingdom which cannot be moved<sup>x</sup>,* an *Everlasting Kingdom<sup>y</sup>:* Nay, to carry our Thoughts to the highest Degree of Dignity and Glory, it is spoken of as *a fitting down with Christ on his Throne<sup>z</sup>.*

<sup>o</sup> Rev. xxi. 23. xxiii. 5. <sup>p</sup> Rev. i. 6. <sup>q</sup> Rev. iv. 4. <sup>r</sup> Rev. v. 8. <sup>s</sup> Rev. iv. 8. <sup>t</sup> Rev. iii. 12.  
<sup>u</sup> 1 Cor. ix. 25. <sup>v</sup> 1 Pet. v. 4. <sup>x</sup> Heb. xii. 28.  
<sup>y</sup> 2 Pet. i. 11. <sup>z</sup> Rev. ii. 21.

BUT further, The *Value* of these illustrious *Representations* is much increased, if we consider the *Character of the Persons* by whom they are made. They were Persons well acquainted with these Things, having received their Information from a *Divine Revelation*, and from the immediate *Visions of God*. They were also Persons of such sublime and elevated *Sentiments*, that they had a sovereign *Contempt* for all the Enjoyments of Time, and Sense, even those which the Generality of Mankind set the greatest Value upon; and counted all *Things but Loss for the Knowledge of Christ*<sup>a</sup>, and the *Testimony of a good Conscience*<sup>b</sup>, while they looked not at *Temporal*, but at *Eternal Things*<sup>c</sup>. They could deliberately, constantly, and even cheerfully, resign all the *Riches*, and *Honours*, and carnal *Pleasures*, which they might have purchased by their Apostacy from Religion; and were ready to embrace *Bonds*, *Imprisonment*, or *Death* itself, when it met them in the Way of their Duty.—Now certainly a *Glory*, with which such holy, wise, and heroick Persons were so passionately enamoured, and which they describe with such *Pathos* of Language, and such Extasy of Delight, while they were trampling with so generous a Disdain on every Thing which Earth

<sup>a</sup> Phil. iii. 8.   <sup>b</sup> 2 Cor. i. 12.   <sup>c</sup> 2 Cor. iv. 12.

*Earth* calls Good and Great, must deserve our very attentive Regard. And this it yet more evidently will appear to do, if we consider,

2. "IT is the State and World, which  
 " GOD has prepared for the Display  
 " of his Glory, and the Entertainment  
 " of the most favoured of his Crea-  
 " tures."

THIS Argument seems to be hinted at, when it is said, (as in the Place I referred to before,) *Eye hath not seen, nor Ear heard, neither have entered into the Heart of Man, the Things which GOD hath prepared for them that love him*<sup>4</sup>. GOD well knows the Capacity of his Creatures, and how much Happiness they are able and fit to receive; and he can fill their Capacities to the utmost; nay, he can farther enlarge them to what Degree he pleases, that they may admit superior Degrees of Glory and Felicity. A Happiness therefore, which he has prepared on purpose, to display the Riches of his Magnificence and Love, and to shew what he can do to delight his Creatures, must certainly be in some Measure proportionable, if I may so express it, to the Infinity of his own Sacred Perfections. Let us then seri-

180 *Heaven is prepared by GOD* SER. 6.  
ously consider, who *GOD* is; and attentively dwell in our Meditation, on the Extent of his *Power*, and the Riches of his *Bounty*; and our *Conception of the Happiness of Heaven* must be raised to something more glorious, than the most emphatical *Words* can perfectly describe.

AND here, to assist our Imagination in some Degree, let us look round us, and take a Survey of this *Visible World*. This *Earth*, how conveniently has he furnished it, how beautifully has he disposed it, how richly has he adorned it! What various and abundant *Provision* has he made for the Subsistence, the Accommodation, and the Entertainment of the *Creatures* that inhabit it! and especially of *Man*, in whom this Scheme and System of Things appears to centre, and to whom it is all most wisely and graciously referred! Yet *Earth* is the Habitation of a Race of *mean* and *degenerate Creatures*, who are but in a *State of Trial*; nay, it is the Habitation of Thousands and Ten Thousands of *GOD's incorrigible Enemies*, with whom *he is angry every Day*<sup>e</sup>. Already it is marked with some awful Characters of the *Divine Displeasure*<sup>f</sup>; and the *Scripture* assures us, that it is *reserved unto Fire, against the Day of Judgment, and Perdition of ungodly Men*<sup>f</sup>. Yet even this *Earth* is not a Spectacle unwor-

<sup>e</sup> Psal. viii. 11.

<sup>f</sup> 2 Pet. viii. 7.

unworthy our Regard ; nor can we, if we allow ourselves to survey it with becoming Attention, behold it without an affecting Mixture of Admiration, of Love, and of Joy : *Passions*, that will strike us yet more powerfully, if from *this Earth* of ours we raise our Eyes to the *Visible Heavens* ; and there behold the Glory of the *Sun*, the Brightness of the *Moon*, and all the numerous *Hosts of Heaven* that attend in her Train. Who that considers, with any Degree of Attention, their Magnitude, their Lustre, their Motion, and their Influence, can forbear crying out, *Oh Lord our Lord, how excellent is thy Name in all the Earth, who hast set thy Glory above the Heavens* ! And when, with even these in our View, we further reflect, that there is *another Apartment*, as yet *Invisible*, of which this spangled Firmament is but, as it were, the shining Vail ; an *Apartment*, where the great Creator and Governor of all has fixed his stated Residence, and erected the *Throne of his Glory* ; even that *Throne*, which is for ever surrounded by all the most holy and excellent of his Creatures ; we must be convinced, it is something *more beautiful*, and *more magnificent* than this harmonious System itself. And methinks, when we have said *more beautiful and more magnificent than this*, Imagi-

gination is ready to fail us, and to leave the Mind dazzled and overwhelmed with an *Effulgency of Lustre*, which it cannot delineate, and can scarce sustain. Yet will our venerable Apprehensions of it be farther assisted, if we consider,

3. THAT the *Kingdom of Heaven* is  
 "the great *Purchase* of the *Blood* of  
 "God's only-begotten Son;" and there-  
 fore to be sure it must be inconceivably  
 valuable.

If you are at all acquainted with your *Bibles*, you must know, that we are by *Sin* in a State of *Alienation from GOD*<sup>h</sup>; that we had forfeited all our Title to his Love, and stood justly exposed to his severe Displeasure; and that 'tis *Jesus who delivers us from the Wrath to come*<sup>i</sup>. Now if we owe it to his *Merit* and Attonement that we live<sup>k</sup>, much more are we to ascribe it to him, if we are raised to any superior Degree of *Happiness*. If *GOD* could not, with Honour to his Justice, have suffered us, without such a *Propitiation*, to have passed off with Impunity; much less could he, without it, have received us to his Embraces, and have advanced us to *fit with him on his Throne*.

<sup>h</sup> Ephes. iv. 18.      <sup>i</sup> 1 Thess. i. 10.      <sup>k</sup> 1 John iv. 9.

*Throne*<sup>1.</sup> Accordingly it is said of the *blessed Martyrs*, in the *Heavenly World*, even of those, who had so gloriously distinguished their Fidelity and Zeal, and *loved not their Lives unto the Death*<sup>m</sup>; that they had *washed their Robes, and made them white in the Blood of the Lamb*<sup>n</sup>: And they gratefully acknowledge it in their Hymns of Praise, that *Christ had redeemed them to GOD by his Blood, and had made them Kings and Priests unto GOD*<sup>o</sup>.

Now let us seriously reflect, and consider, what this *Blood of the Lamb* is. The Apostle Peter tells us, that *Silver and Gold*, and all the peculiar Treasures of Kings and Princes, are but *corruptible Things*<sup>p</sup>, or perishing and worthless Trifles, when compared with it. And no Wonder, it is represented in such exalted Language, when we consider it was *the Blood of the only-begotten Son of GOD*, who is *the Brightness of his Father's Glory, and the express Image of his Person*<sup>q</sup>, and indeed, *one with him*<sup>r</sup>, being possess'd of a *Nature* truly and properly *Divine*; so that it is called *the Blood of GOLD*<sup>s</sup>. We may well argue even from these transient Surveys, that it was some *important Happiness*, which he came to procure at so ex-

N 4 pensive

<sup>1</sup> Rev. iii. 27.   <sup>m</sup> Rev. xii. 11.   <sup>n</sup> Rev. vii. 14.  
<sup>o</sup> Rev. v. 9, 10.   <sup>p</sup> 1 Pet. i. 18, 19.   <sup>q</sup> Heb. i. 3.  
<sup>r</sup> John x. 30.   <sup>s</sup> Acts, xx. 28.

pensive a Rate. Had an Angel been sent down from Heaven, we should naturally have concluded, it must have been upon some momentous Errand: Surely then, when the Lord of Angels comes down, not only to live on Earth, but to expire in bitter Agonies on the Cross, to purchase a Benefit for us, we may be well assured, that this Benefit must be very considerable. Our Lord Jesus Christ must certainly set a very great Value upon it, or he would not have purchased it at such a Price; And we are sure, the Value that he apprehended in it, must be its true Value. He could not be imposed upon by any false Appearance of Glory and Splendor: He despised with a just and generous Contempt all the Kingdoms of the World, and the Glory of them<sup>t</sup>: And he was also well acquainted with the Celestial Kingdom, having so long dwelt in it, and so long presided over it: Yet so highly does he esteem it, that he speaks of it upon all Occasions, as the highest possible Gift of Divine Bounty, the richest Preparation, and noblest Contrivance of Divine Love: Yea, he regards it as a Felicity so great, that when he conducts his People into it, with the last solemn Pomp of the Judgment-Day, it is said, he shall see of the Travail of his Soul, and be satisfied<sup>u</sup>, allowing it to

<sup>t</sup> Matt. iv. 8, 10.<sup>u</sup> Mai. liii. 11.

SER. 6. and yet died to purchase it. 185

be a just Equivalent for all he has done, and  
all he has suffered in so glorious a Cause.

- 4. THE Excellency of the Heavenly Kingdom will further appear, if we consider, that "it is the main Work of the "Spirit of GOD upon Mens Hearts, "to prepare them for an' Admittance "into it."

You well know, that the Blessed Spirit of GOD is spoken of as that *Divine Agent*, by whom *all the Hosts of Heaven were created*, and all God's various Works produced<sup>w</sup>; and it is *he*, that *knows the Things of GOD*, even as the *Human Spirit knows the Things of a Man*<sup>x</sup>. Now it is his peculiar Office in the Economy of our Redemption, to form the Soul to *a Meetness for Glory*. Accordingly when the Apostle Paul had been reminding the *Corinthians*, that while they continued in their sinful State, they were *unfit for the Kingdom of GOD*; he adds, *But ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified, in the Name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our GOD*<sup>y</sup>.

THAT the Spirit should condescend to engage at all in such a *Work*, must give us a very sublime Idea of the End at which it aims.

• • Job xxxiii. 4. Psal. xxxiii. 6.      <sup>x</sup> 1 Cor. ii. 11.  
<sup>y</sup> 1 Cor. vi. 11.

aims. But much more will *that Idea* be raised, when we consider with what a *Variety*, and what a *Constancy* of *Operations* he begins, continues, and perfects it. He attempts it, (as we shall hereafter more particularly shew you,) sometimes by *Convictions of Terror*, and sometimes by *Insinuations of Love*; and by one Method or another, in the Hearts of all the *Heirs of this Glory*, he works *so great a Change*, that it is represented by *turning a Heart of Stone into a Heart of Flesh*<sup>a</sup>, by *raising the Dead from their Graves*<sup>b</sup>, yea, by *producing a New Creation*<sup>b</sup>. For this does he watch over the Soul with the tenderest Care, and continues his *Friendly Offices*, to recover it from Relapses, and gradually to form it to advancing Degrees of Sanctity, till at length it be enabled to *perfect Holiness in the Fear of GOD*<sup>c</sup>. Nay, so intent is this *Sacred Agent* on the important Work, that when *Sinners* most insolently and ungratefully *reject him*, and by *resisting him* oppose *their own Happiness*, he does not immediately leave them; he strikes them again and again; and waits upon them for succeeding Days, and Months, and Years: And when perhaps *the Sincere Convert* makes the most *ungrate-*

<sup>a</sup> Ezek. xxxvi. 26.      <sup>a</sup> Ezek. xxxvii. 14. Eph. ii. 5, 6.      <sup>b</sup> 2 Cor. v. 17. Eph. ii. 10.      <sup>c</sup> 2 Cor. vii. 1.

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*ungrateful Return for the Experience of his Goodness,* even after he has acknowledged, and at length obeyed it; when under the fatal Transport of some ungoverned Passion, and the Influence of some strong Temptation, he acts as if he were intent upon *tearing down the Work of the Spirit of GOD* • upon his Soul, and *driving him* for ever away; yet in how many Instances does he *return again* after all these Injuries, pleading the Cause of God with a sweetly prevailing Eloquence, and thus *healing the Wound*, and *repairing the Breach*, and making it perhaps stronger than before? And all this, *for what?* that the happy Subject of all these *kind Operations* may be formed to *a Fitness* for the *Kingdom of Heaven*.—And are we to regard this *Blessed Spirit* as an *unmeaning Agent*, or as incapable of judging of the *Importance* of this End for which he acts? Is that *Almighty Energy* of his employ'd in an insignificant Manner? Surely *Nicodemus*, slow of Understanding as he was, must apprehend the *Importance* of *entering into the Kingdom of Heaven*, when he heard, that in order to be *admitted* to it, *a Man must be born of the Spirit*. And let me add once more,

5. THAT the Excellency of the *Heavenly Kingdom* may farther be argued  
“ from the *Eagerness* with which the  
“ *Enemy*

" *Enemy of Souls* is endeavouring to  
" prevent our Entrance into it."

You know, *the Devil* is always represented as the *inveterate Enemy* of our *Happiness*. His Rage is express'd by that of a *roaring Lion*, *that walks about, seeking whom he may devour*<sup>a</sup>; and with unwearied Diligence he is continually employed in forming and purusing his Temptations: And this is the *grand Design* of all, that he may *exclude us* from the promised *Felicity*. While Sinners are in their *Unregenerate State*, he endeavours to engage all their Regards to the Objects of Time and Sense; and for that Purpose he continually presents them with a Variety of Entertainments and Amusements suited to their respective Tempers and Circumstances. If they are awaken'd to any serious Concern about their Eternal Salvation, he uses his utmost Address to divert their Minds from an Attendance to it: And for this Purpose he displays before them *all the Allurements of Sin* in its most engaging Forms; and if they are not captivated with these, he often puts on a *Face of Terror*, and endeavours to affright them from Religion by the most gloomy Representations of it, or by horrible and distracting Suggestions, " that it is now for ever

" too

<sup>a</sup> 1 Pet. v. 8.

"*too late to attain it.*" Or if Divine Grace surmount all this Opposition, and the Sinner resolutely chuses his Portion in *Heaven*, and puts his Soul into the Hands of *Christ* to be conducted to it; the Malice of *Satan* pursues him even to that Sacred Retreat, which he has sought in the Arms of his *Saviour*: And if he cannot *prevent* the Soul from *entering into Heaven*, he will at least labour to bring it into such a State of *Negligence*, and to seduce it into those *Delays* and *Relapses*, which may divert its Regards to that Blessed World, which may cloud its Evidences of it, and may at least, as much as possible, diminish the Degree of its Glory there.

Now permit me, in this Instance, to turn the Artillery of this cunning *Enemy* against himself, and to argue the Excellency of *this Kingdom*, from the *Zeal* and *Attachment* with which he endeavours to *obstruct* your *attaining it*. Tho' *Satan* be now a very degenerate *Creature*, he was once *an Angel of Light*, and still retains much of the *Knowledge*, tho' he has lost the *Rectitude* and *Integrity* of the *Angelick Nature*. And he particularly knows *what Heaven is*, because he was once an Inhabitant there; and while he is endeavouring to persuade the Sinner to prefer *Earth* before it, he does, by that very Endeavour incontestably prove, that he himself

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self knows the contrary, and is fully apprized  
that there is nothing here to be compared  
with the *Felicity* of the *Future State*. And  
therefore while he seeks the *Destruction of*  
*the Soul*, he can leave it in the Enjoyment  
of all its *Worldly Prosperity*; nay, he will at-  
tempt to lead him into Methods, by which  
*this Prosperity* may be promoted and in-  
creased.

AND thus, Sirs, I have endeavoured a  
little to represent to you, *what this Kingdom*  
*of Heaven is*, from which we are assured  
that *Unconverted Sinners* shall for ever be *ex-  
cluded*. I have argued its *Excellency*,—from  
the *Representations* which are made of it in  
the *Word of GOD*,—from its being the *Pre-  
paration of Divine Love*,—from its being the  
*Purchase of a Redeemer's Blood*,—and the  
*End*, to which, on the one Hand, the glo-  
rious *Operations* of the *Blessed Spirit* lead,—  
and of which, on the other Hand, all the  
*Stratagems* and *Affaults* of the *Prince of*  
*Darkness* are intended to *deprive us*.—If there-  
fore there be Truth in *Scripture*, if there  
be Wisdom in *Heaven*, or Policy in *Hell*,  
it must surely be *infinitely important*. And  
will any of you be such *mean spirited Crea-  
tures*, as, when *this Happiness* is proposed  
to you, basely to relinquish the Pursuit of it,  
and to sacrifice *this blessed Hope to any perish-  
ing*

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ing Trifle of mortal Life. Surely it would  
be *Madness*; tho' nothing more were to be  
apprehended, than the *Loss of it*; and tho'  
when *Heaven* were *lost*, all that *Earth* can  
give should remain, if not to counterbalance  
the *Loss*, yet at least to make you *less sensible*  
of it. But the Weight of the Argu-  
ment will much more evidently appear, if  
you consider,

[2.] *WHAT will at last become of all  
those, who are excluded from this Hea-  
venly Kingdom.*

AND here I beseech you to ask your own  
Consciences, whether they be not inward-  
ly persuaded,—that *those* who are *excluded*  
*from Heaven*, will remain in a State of Exist-  
ence, in which they will be ever *sensible* of  
*their Loss*,—and will be delivered over by  
Divine Vengeance into that *Seat of Torment*,  
which God has prepared for the *Punish-  
ment* of his implacable and incorrigible *Ene-  
mies*.—This many of you do undoubtedly  
believe of such Persons in general: Believe  
it therefore of yourselves, if you are, and  
continue, in an *Unregenerate State*.

I. “ You will still continue in a State of  
“ Existence, in which you will be  
“ ~~ever~~ *sensible* of your *Loss*.”

IT might afford some wretched Kind of Consolation to you, if, as soon as you died out of this World, your *Being*, or your *Apprehensive Powers* were immediately to cease. Then the *Loss of Heaven* would only be an Affliction to you in your dying Moments, when you saw the *Enjoyments of Earth* were come to an End, and that you must have no Part in any Future Happiness. But alas, Sirs, you cannot but know, that when your *Bodies are dead*, and consumed in their Graves, your *Thinking Faculties* will still be continued to you: And oh, that you would seriously reflect, how they will then be *employed!* You will then be thinking what you have done in Life, what you have chose for your *Happiness*, and what has been the *Consequence of that Choice*. You will look round in vain for such *Accommodations* and *Pleasures*, as you were once most fond of: But they will be no more; and when you perceive them vanished, like the Visionary Amusements of a *Dream*, you will lift up your astonished Eyes towards the *Regions of Glory*. And you indeed will have a lively *View of them*: But to what Purpose will that *View* serve? Only through the righteous Vengeance of God, to aggravate your *Misery* and *Despair*. "Alas," will you think, "there are Millions of Creatures yonder

" *in Heaven*, who are rejoicing in the Sight  
 " and Favour of *GOD*, and are as full of  
 " Happiness as their Natures can contain,  
 " and shall be so~~for ever~~; while *I am cut*  
 " off from all *Share* in the Divine Bounty.  
 " *Rivers of Pleasure* are flowing in upon  
 " them, while *not one Drop* is sent down to  
 " me; nor could I obtain it, tho' I were  
 " to ask the Favour, from the *least* of  
*Christ's Servants* there. *I am cast out* as  
 " an *accursed Wretch*, with whom *GOD*,  
 and his holy and blessed Creatures will  
 " have no farther *Intercourse*, or *Communion*:  
 " And why *am I thus cast out?* and why *am*  
 " *I thus cut off* from God's Favour, and  
 " driven from his Presence, while *so many*  
 " that dwelt with me on Earth, are *admit-*  
 " *ted to it?* *My Nature* was originally as  
 " *capable of Happiness* as theirs; and tho' it  
 " was sadly degenerate, it might, like theirs,  
 " have been *renewed*. *GOD* was once offer-  
 " *ing me that Grace*, by which my disor-  
 " dered Soul might have been *transform'd*,  
 " and I might have been *fitted* for the *Re-*  
 " *gions of Glory*: But *I despised* all these  
 " Offers, and *gave the Preference* to those  
 " fading *Vanities*, which, alas! have for  
 " ever forsaken me. And now *they that*  
 " *were ready are gone* in to the delightful  
 " Banquet, ~~and the Door is shut~~<sup>e</sup>; the

• Matth. xxv. 10.



" Ever-

" Everlasting Gates are shut for ever, and  
 " bar'd against me. And here I must lie at  
 " this miserable Distance, envying and raging  
 " at their Happiness, which, of whatever  
 " Sight or Knowledge I may have of it, I  
 " must never, never, never partake."

SUCH Reflections as these, Sirs, will cut deep into your Souls; and accordingly our Lord declares to ~~Impenitent~~ Sinners in his own Days, *There shall be weeping and gnashing of Teeth, when you see others sitting down in the Kingdom of GOD, and you yourselves thrust out*<sup>f</sup>. And if you would reflect, you might easily apprehend this.. How would you be enraged at yourselves, if by your Folly you had neglected securing a plentiful Estate, when it was offered to you on the most easy Terms; and you actually saw others, once your Equals, and perhaps your Inferiors, in the Possession of it, in Consequence of having taken those Methods which you stupidly neglected? The Reflection, I doubt not, would very much impair the Pleasure you might find in other comfortable and agreeable Circumstances. How much more insupportable then will the Loss of Heaven appear to you, when you come to see, and know, what it is you have lost, and have nothing to relieve, or support you, under the painful Recollections?

IT

IT is to no Purpose to object, that upon the Principles of my last Discourse, there will be no Room to lament your Exclusion from those Entertainments, which you would be incapable of relishing, if you were admitted to them: For you will then see, and lament that Incapacity, as a very great Misery. As, if a Man, who was naturally fond of Feasting and Mirth, should see a great many regaling themselves, and reveling about him, while he was languishing under some painful Distemper, which made him incapable of joining in the Entertainment; he would yet grieve, that he had no Part in it: And it would be the Increase, rather than the Alleviation of his Uneasiness, that it was his Sicknes<sup>s</sup> which unfitted him for it; especially if, as in your Case, it was a Sicknes<sup>s</sup>, which he had brought upon himself by his own Folly, and for which he had been offered an easy, pleasant, and infallible Remedy, which he had refused to use, till the Malady was grown utterly incurable. One would imagine, this Thought would be enough to impress you; but if it do not, let me intreat, and even charge you to consider,

2. THAT if you are excluded from the Kingdom of Heaven, you will be sign'd over to those Regions of Darkness,

ness, *Despair*, and *Misery*, which God has prepared for those unhappy *Criminals*, who are the Objects of his final Displeasure, and whom he will render Everlasting Monuments of his Wrath.

THERE is something in Human Nature, that starts back at the Thought of *Anihilation* with strong ~~Refugee~~<sup>Repugnance</sup>: And yet how many Thousands are there in this miserable *World*, who would with all their Souls fly to it as a *Refuge*? *They shall seek Death*, as an Inspired Writer strongly expresses it, *and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and Death shall flee from them*<sup>s</sup>. I will not attempt to enter into a Detail of the *Horrors*, attending the *Place* and *State*, into which all who are excluded from the Glories of the *Heavenly World* shall be cast, and in which they shall be fixed. Let that one awful Scripture suffice for a *Specimen* of many more; in which we are told, that *every one whose Name was not found written in the Book of Life*, (or who was not registered in the Number of those, who were to inhabit the *New Jerusalem*, or the *Kingdom of Heaven*,) *was cast into the Lake of Fire*<sup>h</sup>; or, as it is afterwards expressed, *into the Lake that burns with Fire and Brimstone*<sup>i</sup>. Think of this, and ask your own Hearts, you that are so impatient

<sup>s</sup> Rev. ix. 6.

<sup>h</sup> Rev. xx. 15.

<sup>i</sup> Rev. xxi. 8.

tient of the little Evils of Mortal Life, whether you can endure to take up your Abode for ever in devouring Fire, or whether you can dwell with Everlasting Burnings<sup>k</sup>? Yet these are the *Images*, by which the *Word of GOD* represents it; to be plunged as in a *Sea of liquid Fire*, whose *Flames* are exasperated and heighten'd, by being fed with *Brimstone*; nay, as the *Prophet* speaks, by a copious *Stream of Brimstone*, so expressly appointed by *GOD* himself, that this as well as the *River of the Water of Life*, is represented as proceeding immediately from him: *He has made Tophet deep and large; the Pile thereof is Fire and much Wood, and the Breath of the Lord, like a Stream of Brimstone, does kindle it*<sup>l</sup>.

- 'Tis painful to a tender Mind to *think of this*, as what its Fellow-Creatures are obnoxious to: 'Tis grievous to *speak of it*, in these *dreadful Terms*. But who are *we*, that we should be *more merciful than GOD*? Or rather, how can we imagine it is *Mercy*, to avoid speaking of the Appointment of Infinite Wisdom, for the *Punishment of Impenitent Sinners*? What *Mercy* were *that*, Sirs, to avoid to mention *these Terrors* to you, and to neglect to warn you of them, because they are *great*? which is indeed the very

O 3                      Reason,

198 *The Unregenerate are called SER. 6.*  
Reason, why the Scripture thus pathetically  
describes them.

Away therefore with this foolish, this treacherous *Compassion*, which chuses rather to leave Men to be consum'd, than to disturb their Slumbers ! Think, Sirs, of *that wretched Glutton*, whom *Christ* describes as *lifting up his Eyes in Hell, being in Torments : seeing the Regions of the Blessed at an unapproachable Distance, and begging in vain that one Drop of Water might be sent to cool his Tongue*, amidst all the raging Thirst with which he was tormented in this *Flame*<sup>m</sup>. Regard it attentively ; for as *GOD lives, and as your Soul lives*, if you continue in an *Unrenewed State*, you see in *that Wretch* the very *Image and Representation of yourselves*. Yes, Sinners, *I testify it to you this Day*, that intolerable as it seems, it will, *on that Supposition*, be your own *certain Fate* ; or to speak much more properly, your *righteous, but inevitable Doom*. *Heaven and Earth* will desert you in that dreadful Hour : Or, if the Inhabitants of both were to join to *intercede* for you, it would be *in vain*. *Sentence* will be past, and *Execution* done : *Hell* will *open its Mouth* to receive you, and *shut it again* for ever to inclose you ; with *Thousands, and Ten Thousands more*, among whom you will not find one to com-fort

<sup>m</sup> Luke xvi. 23, 24.

fort you, but every one ready to afflict you.

- Then shall you know the *Value* which GOD sets upon his *Heavenly Kingdom*, by the Judgments he inflicts upon you for neglecting and despising it ; and then shall you know the *Importance* of being *born again*, that *only Means* by which *Hell* can be avoided, and *Heaven* secured.

AND let me further add, that *Conviction* will quickly come in this terrible Way, if you are not now prevailed upon to consider these Things ; Things, which if you have the least Regard to the *Word of GOD*, you cannot but notionally believe. Do not then go about to *annihilate* (as it were) these Prospects to your Mind, by placing them at a long *Distance*. The *Distance* is not so great, as to deserve a Mention : *The Patience of GOD* will not wait upon you for *Thousands*, or even *Hundreds of Years* : You have a few mortal *Days*, in which to consider of the Matter ; or rather, you have the *present Moment* to consider of it. And if you improve the Opportunity, it is well ; but if not, the just and uniform Methods of the Divine Administration shall proceed, tho' it should be to your *Ruin*. GOD has vindicated the Honours of his violated *Law*, and despised *Gospel*, upon Millions, who with the *Rebel Angels*, by whom they have been seduced, are even now reserved in *Everlasting Chains under Darkness*.

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ness, unto the Judgment of the great Day<sup>n</sup> ;  
and he will as surely vindicate them upon  
you. If you do not repent, if you are not Re-  
generate, you shall all likewise perish<sup>o</sup>, and  
not one of you shall escape.

AND thus I close this copious and im-  
portant Argument ; this Argument in which  
Life and Death, Salvation and Damnation  
are concerned. View it, my Friends, *in all*  
*its Connection*, and see in what Part of it  
*the Chain* can be broken. Will you say, that  
without Regeneration you can secure an Inter-  
est in the Kingdom of Heaven, tho' the Con-  
stitution of Heaven oppose it, and all the De-  
clarations of GOD's Word stand directly  
against it ; and tho' Nature itself reclaim,  
and Conscience testify your Incapacity to en-  
joy it ? Or will you say, that being excluded  
from it, you shall suffer no considerable  
Damage, tho' you lose so glorious a State,  
the noblest Preparation of Divine Love, the  
Purchase of Redemptive Blood, and the End  
of the Spirit's Operation on the Soul ; tho'  
you ever remain sensible of your Loss, and be  
consign'd over to dwell in that flaming Prison,  
which GOD has prepared for the Devil  
and his Angels, and where all the Terrors  
of his righteous Judgments are made  
known ?

BUT

<sup>a</sup> Jude, ver. 6.      <sup>b</sup> Luke xiii. 3..

BUT if you are indeed inwardly *convinc'd* of the *Truth* and *Importance* of these Things, and will go away, and act as before, without *any Regard to them*, I can say no more. The *Reason of Man*, and the *Word of GOD* can point out no stronger Arguments, than *an Infinite Good* on the one Hand, and *an Infinite Evil* on the other.

HEAR therefore, *Oh Heavens, and give Ear, Oh Earth!* and let *Angels and Devils* join their *Astonishment*; that *Creatures*, who would strenuously contend, and warmly exert themselves, I will not say merely for an *Earthly Kingdom*, but in an Affair where only *a few Pounds*, or perhaps *a few Shillings* or *Pence* were concern'd, are *indifferent* here, where, by their own Confession, a *Happy* or *Miserable ETERNITY* is in question. For *indifferent*, I fear, some of you are, and will continue. I have represented these Things in the Integrity of my Heart, *as in the Sight of GOD*, not in artful Forms of Speech, but in the genuine Language which the strong Emotions of my own Soul, in the Views of them, most naturally dictated. Yet I think it not at all improbable, that *some of you*, and some perhaps who do not now imagine it, will, as soon as you return Home, divert your Thoughts and Discourses to other Objects, and may perhaps,

perhaps, as heretofore, lie down upon your Beds without spending one Quarter of an Hour, or even one serious Minute, in lamenting your miserable State before God, and seeking that Help and Deliverance which his Grace alone can give. But if you thus lie down, make, if you can, a Covenant with Death, that it may not break ~~it~~ upon your Slumbers ; and an ~~Agreement~~ with Hell<sup>P.</sup>, that before the Return of the Morning, it may not flash in upon your careless Souls another Kind of Conviction, than they will now receive from the Voice of Reason and the Word of GOD.

\* Isai. xxviii. 15.





## S E R M O N VII.

Of the Necessity of Divine Influences to produce Regeneration in the Soul.

TITUS iii. 5, 6.

*Not by Works of Righteousness, which we have done, but according to his Mercy he saved us, by the Washing of Regeneration, and Renewing of the Holy Ghost ; which he shed on us abundantly, through Jesus Christ our Saviour.*

If my Busines were to explain and illustrate this Scripture at large, it would yield an ample Field for accurate Criticism, and useful Discourse, and more especially would lead us into a Variety of Practical Remarks, on which it would be pleasant to dilate in our Meditations. It evidently implies,

implies, "that those who are *the Saved of the Lord*, are brought to the *Practice* of *good Works*;" without which *Faith is dead*<sup>a</sup>, and all Pretences to a *Saving Change* are not only vain, but insolent. Yet it plainly testifies to us, "that our *Salvation*, and Acceptance with God, is not to be ascribed to *these*, but to the *Divine Mercy*: which *Mercy operates by sanctifying our Hearts*; thro' the renewing Influence of the *Holy Spirit*:" And, "that there is *an abundant Effusion* of this *Spirit* under the *Gospel*," which is therefore with great Propriety called *the Ministrations of the Spirit*<sup>b</sup>, and *the Law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus*<sup>c</sup>.

BUT I must necessarily, in Pursuance of my *General Scheme*, wave several of *these Remarks*, that I may leave myself Room to insist on the *Grand Topick* I intend from the Words.

I HAVE already shewn you, who may be said to be in an *Unregenerate State*: I have also described *the Change*, which *Regeneration* makes in the Soul: And have largely shewn you, in the *Three last Discourses*, the absolute *Necessity* and *Importance* of it. And now I proceed,

#### FOURTH-

<sup>a</sup> Jam. ii. 17.      <sup>b</sup> 2 Cor. iii. 8.      <sup>c</sup> Rom. viii. 2.

FOURTHLY, To shew the *Necessity* there is, of the *Agency* of the *Divine Power*, in order to produce this great and important *Change*.

THIS is strongly implied in the Words of the *Text*; in which the *Apostle*, speaking of the Method of *GOD* has been pleased to take for the Display of his Goodness in the Salvation and Happiness of fallen Men, gives us this affecting View of it, that *it is not by Works of Righteousness, which we, i.e. any of us Christians, have done, but according to his Free Grace and Mercy that he has saved us, by the Washing, or (as might be render'd,) the Laver, of Regeneration, and the Renewing of the Holy Ghost.*

I SHALL be ready to acknowledge, with the Generality of *Ancient* and *Modern Interpreters*, that *Baptism* may probably here be called *the Laver of Regeneration*; *GOD* having appointed, that as *New-born Children* are *washed*, so they, who by the Influences of his Grace on their Hearts are *born again*, should in Token of their Repentance for the Sins of their past Life, be *washed* with *Baptismal Water*, supposing, (which was here apparently the Case, in this early Age of Christianity,) they had not received *that Ordinance* in their Infancy. Nevertheless lest any

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any should imagine, that an *External Ceremony* was sufficient, or that it was the *Chief Thing* intended, the *Apostle* takes the Matter higher. And as the *Apostle Peter* tells us, that the *Baptism* which *saves us*, is not merely *the putting away the Filth of the Flesh*, but *the Answer of a good Conscience towards GOD<sup>d</sup>*; To the *Apostle Paul*<sup>here</sup> adds, that we are saved by *the Renewing of the Holy Ghost*: By which I can by no Means understand something entirely *distinct from*, and *subsequent to*, his *Regenerating Influences*; for according to the View of *Regeneration* stated in our former Discourses, none can be *regenerated*, who are not *renewed*: But it seems to explain the former Clause, and to refer to the more positive Effect produced by *Divine Grace* on the Soul, whereby *Christians* are not only purified from *Sin*, but disposed to, and quicken'd in, a Course of *Holy Obedience*. And then he further tells us, that *this Spirit* is the *Gift of GOD*, and is plentifully communicated to us in the Name, and through the Hands, of the Blessed Redeemer, *being shed on us abundantly by GOD, through Jesus Christ our Saviour.*

AGREEABLY therefore to the General Design and Purport of *these Words*, I shall go on to demonstrate the absolute Necessity  
of

SER. 7. *this Change to a Divine Agency.* 207  
of a *Divine Agency* and *Operation* in this  
great Work of our *Regeneration*; which I  
shall do from a Variety of *Topicks*. And  
here I shall studiously wave many *Contro-  
versies*, with which the *Christian World* has  
been afflicted, and the soundest Part of it  
disturbed, with Relation to the *Kind* and  
*Manner* of *this Influence*. I will not so much  
as mention them, and much less discuss  
them; *lest Satan should take an Advantage of  
us*, to divert our Minds from what is *Essen-  
tial* in *this Doctrine*, to what is *merely Circumstantial*. Only let it be observed, in ge-  
neral, that I speak of “ such an *Agency of*  
“ *GOD* on our Minds, as offers no *Violence*  
“ to the Rational and Active Nature which  
“ *GOD* has given us, nor does by any Means  
“ supersede our Obligation to those *Duties*  
“ which his Word requires; but on the  
“ contrary, cures and perfects our Nature,  
“ and *disposes the Soul* to a Regard to such  
“ incumbent *Duties*, and *strengthens it* in  
“ the Discharge of them.” With this only  
*Preliminary*, which appears to me highly  
important, I proceed to shew the *Reasonableness* of ascribing *this Change* to a *Divine Agency*, rather than to any Thing else, which may be supposed to have any Share in producing it. And we may infer this,

[1.] “ FROM

• 2 Cor. ii. 11. •

[I.] "FROM the general and necessary  
 "Dependance of the whole *Created*  
 "World upon *GOD*."

THERE was a *Philosophical*, as well as *Divine Truth*, in that Observation of the Apostle *Paul* at *Athens*, which was well worthy the most learned Assembly; In him, i. e. in *GOD*, we live, and move, and have our *Being*<sup>f</sup>. Such is the innate Weakness of *Created Nature*, that it continually depends on a *Divine Support*. The very Idea of its being *Created* supposes, that it had no Cause of its Existence, but the *Divine Will*, in the First Moment of it: And if it could not then subsist without that *Will*, in the First Moment of its Existence, it neither could subsist without it, in the Second, or in any Future Moment of it: Since to have been dependent for a while, can never be supposed to render any Thing for the future independent. The continued Existence then of all the Creatures, no less of *Angels*, than of *Worms*, or *Trees*, or *Stones*, does properly depend upon the *Divine Energy*, which bears them up, and holds those of them in *Life*, which live, and those of them in *Being*, which are Inanimate or without Life.

AND if their *Being* be dependent, then surely  
 it

<sup>f</sup> *Acts xvii. 28.*

SER|7. *is dependent upon GOD.* 209  
it will follow, that all their *Perceptive* and  
*Active Powers*, whatsoever they are, must  
continually depend upon *GOD*: For to exist  
with such Powers is evidently more, than  
simply to exist; and if a *Divine Agency* be  
necessary for the latter, much more must we  
allow it to be necessary for the former.

THE *Human Mind* therefore, with all its  
Capacities and Improvements, must acknow-  
ledge itself perpetually *indebted to GOD*,  
who is the Fountain of *Truth* and *Wisdom*,  
as well as of *Being*: Accordingly we are  
told, *it is he, that teacheth Man Knowledge*<sup>g</sup>.  
All the Skill of the Husbandman, in one  
Passage of Scripture <sup>h</sup>, and all the *Wisdom*  
of the *Artificer* in another <sup>i</sup>, is ascribed to  
*his Influence*: And if the Improvement of  
the Sciences, and any other *Discovery*, which  
renders Human Life in any Degree more  
commodious and agreeable, is to be ascribed  
to the *Divine Illumination* and *Influence*,  
then surely 'tis from hence *this Art of living*  
*wisely and well* must also be derived. All  
the Views upon which good Resolutions are  
formed, all the strong Impressions upon the  
Mind arising from these Views, and all the  
Steadiness and Determination of Spirit, which  
does not only form such Purposes, but car-  
ries them into Execution, are plainly the

<sup>g</sup> Psal. xciv. 10.  
xxxvi. 1, 2.

<sup>h</sup> Isai. xxviii. 26.

<sup>i</sup> Exod.

Effect of the *Divine Agency* on the Mind; without which no Secular Affairs could be clearly understood, strenuously pursued, or successfully accomplished. And how peculiarly reasonable it is, to apply this Remark to the Point now in View, will appear by attending,

[2.] “To the Greatness and Excellency  
“of this Change,” which speaks it  
aloud to be the *Divine Work*.

I MUST upon this Occasion desire you to recollect what I laid before you in several of the former Discourses. Think of the *New Light* that breaks in upon the Understanding,—of the *New Affections* that are enkindled in the Heart,—of the *New Resolutions*, by which the Will is sweetly and powerfully, tho’ most freely influenced,—and think of the Degree of Vigour attending these Resolutions, and introducing a Series of *New Labours* and *Pursuits*;—and surely you must confess, that *it is the Finger of GOD*. Especially when you consider,—how *beautiful* and *excellent*, as well as how *great* the *Work* is.

Do we acknowledge, that it was the Voice of *GOD*, that first commanded the *Light to shine out of Darkness*<sup>k</sup>, and that it was *worthy* of

SER[7.] proves it to be the Work of GOD. 211  
of a Divine Agency to produce so beautiful a Creature as the Sun, to gild the whole Face of our World, and to dress the different Objects around us in such a various and vivid Assemblage of Colours? And shall we not allow it to be much more worthy of him, to lighten up a benighted Soul, and to reduce its Chaos into Harmony and Order? — Was it worthy of GOD, to form the First Principles even of the Vegetative Life, in the lowest Plant or Herb, and to visit with the refreshing Influences of the Rain and Sun, the Earth wherein these Seeds are sown? And is it not much more worthy of him, to implant the Seed of the Divine Life, and to nourish it from Time to Time by the Influence of his Spirit? — Did it suit the Divine Wisdom and Mercy, to provide for sustaining our mortal Lives, for healing our Wounds, and recovering us from our Diseases? And shall it not much more suit him, to act as the Great Physician of Souls, in restoring them, to Ease, to Health, and Vigour?

THEY must be dead indeed to all Sense of Spiritual Excellency, who do not see, how much more illustriously GOD appears, when considered as the Author of Grace, than merely as the Author of Nature. For indeed all the Works of Nature, and all the Instances of Divine Interposition to maintain its Order and Harmony, will chiefly appear valuable

212 *The Need of a Divine Influence* ST. R. 7.  
and important, when considered in Subser-  
vienty to the gracious Design of recovering  
*Apostate Man* from the Ruin of that degene-  
rate State, without which it had been far  
better for him never to have known *Being*,  
and never to have inhabited a *World* so libe-  
rally furnished with a Variety of Good.  
And therefore I would appeal to every  
*Christian*, whether he does not find a much  
more ardent *Gratitude* glowing in his Heart,  
when he considers *GOD* as the *Author* of  
the *Ruigious* and *Divine*, than merely of the  
*Animal* or the *Rational Life*.

AND permit me here to remark, that  
agreeably to these Reasonings, some of the  
*Pagan Philosophers* have said very serious and  
remarkable Things, concerning the *Reality*,  
and the *Need*, of *Divine Influences* on the  
Mind, for the Production of Virtue and  
Piety there. Thus *Seneca*, when he is speak-  
ing of a Resemblance to the Deity in Char-  
acter, ascribes it to the *Influence of GOD*  
upon the Mind: “Are you surprized,” says  
he, “that Man should approach to the  
“Gods? ’Tis *GOD* that comes to Men;  
“nay, which is yet more, he enters into  
“them: For no Mind becomes virtuous but  
“by his Assistance.” \* *Simplicius* also was  
so

\* *Miraris Hominem ad Deos ire? Deus ad Homines  
venit, imò, (quod proprius est,) in Homines venit: Nulla  
sine Deo Mens bona est.* He had said but just before,  
*Ascendentibus Manum porrigunt.* Senec. Epistol. LXXXIII,

so sensible of the *Necessity* of such an *Influence*, that he “prays to GOD, as the Father and Guide of Reason, so to co-operate with us, as to purge us from all carnal and brutish Affections, that we may be enabled to act according to the Dictates of Reason, and to attain to the true Knowledge of himself.” † And *Maximus Tyrius* argues, agreeably to what was said above, that “if Skill in the Professions and Sciences is insinuated into Mens Minds by a *Diveine Influence*, we can much less imagine, that a Thing so much more excellent as *Virtue* is, can be the Work of any Mortal Art: for strange must be the Notion that we have of GOD, to think that he is liberal and free in Matters of less Moment, and sparing in the greatest.” † And in the same Discourse he tells us, “that even the best disposed Minds, as they are seated in the Midst between the highest Virtue and extream Wickedness, need the Assistance

† Ικετευώ σε, Δεσπότα, ο πάτηρ και πολεμων τε εν ημιν λογος—ευμπράξαι ως αὐλοκινήτος ημιν πρώτη καθαρού την από τη σωματική και των αλογων παθῶν, κλ. Simplic. in Epictet. ad fin.

† Φίλα εκείνα μεν ηγη θεῖα την επιτυνοια φύχαις ανθρώπαις ανακρινασθαι, το δε τὰς σπανιότερον την αρέβην εργασιας τεχνης θυμῆς η πολλα αξιον νομίζεις το θεῖον, πρώτη μεν τα φυλλα καλως και αφθονως παρεσκευασμένας, πρώτη δε τα κρεπτά απορον. Max. Tyr. Dissert. xxii.

“*ance and the Help of GOD*, to incline  
“*and lead them to the better Side.*” || — I  
am sensible, that all these *Philosophers*, with  
many more who speak to the same Purpose,  
living after *Christ’s Time* may be said to have  
learnt such Language from *Christians*; and  
if they did so, I with all who have since  
worn the Name, had been equally teach-  
able: But some who appear’d much *earlier*,  
speak much in the same Manner §, as I  
might easily shew you, if it were not already  
more than Time to observe,

## [3.] THAT

|| Αἱ αρισταὶ τύχης φυσεῖς, αὐφισθεῖσιμοι εν μετρίῳ της  
αὔρας αρέσιν, τῷ δὲ την εὐχαῖνην μοχθὸν πάντα παθόμεναι,  
δεσμοῖς ξυναγωγής Θεοῦ καὶ ξυλικτήρῳ της επιτελεσθε-  
τα κρατίῳ ροπῆς καὶ χεραγωγῆς. Max. Tyr. ibid.

§ It is here remarkable, that *Xenophon* represents,  
*Cyrus* with his dying Breath “as humbly ascribing it  
“ to a *Divine Influence* on his Mind, that he had  
“ been taught to acknowledge the Care of Provi-  
“ dence, and to bear his Prosperity with a becoming  
“ Moderation:” Πολλὴ δὲ οὐκέτι χρήσις. διὰ κατὰ εγιγ-  
νασκον την υμετέραν επιμελεῖσθαι, καὶ εὐδέ πάντοτε επιτελεῖσθαι  
εὐτύχειαν υπὲρ αὐθεντῶν εργάνησα. Xen. Cyropa. i. Lib.  
viii. Cap. 7. §. 1. And *Socrates* is introduced by  
*Plato*, as declaring, “that wheresoever *Virtue* comes,  
“ it is apparently the Fruit of a *Divine Dispensation*:”  
Θεῖα μούσα πρώτη φανέσθαι παραγγεγομένην αρέσιν, οὐς παρα-  
γγεγελαί. Plat. Men. ad fin p. 428. And to this  
Purpose *Plato* has observ’d, “that *Virtue* is not to be  
“ taught, but by *Divine Assistance*?” Άλλ’ εἰδούσι  
διδάσκετεν, εἰ μὲν Θεῷ υπηγόνο. Epinom. pag. 1014. And  
elsewhere he declares, “that if any Man ‘escape the  
“ Temptations of Life, and behave himself as becomes

“ a wor-

[3.] THAT we may further argue the  
Divine Agency in this blessed Work,  
“ from the violent Opposition given  
“ which it prevails in its Rise and  
“ Progress.”

THE awakened Soul, when labouring towards GOD, and aspiring after further Communications of his Grace to form it for His Service, may justly say with David, *Lord, how are they increased that trouble me? many are they that rise up against me*<sup>1</sup>. With how many threatening Dangers are we continually surrounded? and what a numerous Host of *Enemies* are ready to oppose us? The *Law of Sin, that wars in our Members*<sup>m</sup>, and concerning whose Forces it may well be said, *Their Name is Legion, for they are many*<sup>n</sup>: The evil Influence of a degenerate *World*, whose corrupt Examples press like a Torrent, and require the most vigorous Efforts to bear up against them: And in Confederacy with these, and at the Head of all,

P 4

" a worthy Member of Society, as the Laws of it  
" are generally settled," which by the way is some-  
thing very far short of true Religion, " he has Rea-  
" son to own, that it is *GOD* that saves him :" Fu-  
γαρ χει εἰδίνως, ο τι περ αν σαβη τε και γενίτας αὐτον δει,  
εν οτανήι καλασσει τολμειεν, Θεος μοιρας αυτο σωσει.  
De Repub. Lib. vi. pag. 677. Edit. Francof. 1602.

<sup>1</sup> Psal. iii. 1.   <sup>m</sup> Rom. vii. 23.   <sup>n</sup> Mark v. 9.

*the Prince of Darkness*, whose Counsels and Efforts, with relation to this World of ours, do as it were centre in this one Thing, *to prevent Mens Regeneration*; because it is by Means of this, that those are recovered out of the Snare of the Devil, who were before led Captive by him at his Will<sup>o</sup>.

I PERSUADE myself, that when I am speaking on this Head, tho' some may imagine it to be mere empty *Harangue*, and a Common-place of *Declamation*, the experiehc'd Soul will attest the *Truth* of what I say. It may be some of you, who, by what of *these Sermons* you have already heard, have come under some serious *Convictions*, and been awaken'd in good Earnest to be thoughtful about being *born again*, have felt such a Struggle in your own Minds, that you may say, You never knew before what the *Flesh*, the *World*, and the *Devil* were, nor could have imagined, that *their Opposition* to this *Work* was so forcible and violent, as you now find it.—To reform the Irregularities of the *Life*, is comparatively easy; but to root Sin out of the *Soul*, to consecrate the whole *Heart* to God, and demolish those *Idols* that have been set up, as it were, in the *Secret Chambers of Imagery*<sup>p</sup>, is difficult indeed: All the *Corruptions of the Heart* in such a Case are ready to exert themselves, and it

SEN. 5. <sup>1</sup> that is made to this Change. 217

is natural for the *Lusts of the Flesh* to unite against *that* which is set upon destroying them all, nor did you ever know before, that there was such a *World of Sin within you*.—With Violence also does the *Strong Man Armed* exert himself, when his *Goods* are about to be taken from him by one stronger than himself; as our *Lord* with an unerring Propriety and Wisdom represents it <sup>4</sup>: And indeed it seems, as if through the Violence of his Malignity, and the Righteous Judgment of *GOD*, who whenever he pleases can take the *Wife* in his own *Craftiness* <sup>5</sup>, that *Satan* sometimes over-shoots his *Mark*, and raises so sensible an Opposition against the Cause of *God* in the Soul, that an Argument might be drawn, even from that very *Opposition*, to prove the Truth and Excellency of what he sets himself so directly against.—And you have now perhaps experienced too, more than you ever did before, the inveterate *Opposition* of the *Seed of the Serpent*, to *that of the Woman*: You have found, that since you began to think of *Religion* in good Earnest, some have derided you, others it may be have reviled you, and *Enemies* have sprynging up out of your own *House* <sup>6</sup>; though the Impressions you have felt, tend to make you more amiable, more kind, and more useful, and therefore one would think should conciliate their Friendship: But this is a memorable Instance, in which *Self-Love* seems

<sup>1</sup> Luke xi. 21, 22. <sup>2</sup> 1 Cor. iii. 19. <sup>3</sup> Matt. x. 36.

seems to make, as it were, a Sacrifice of it self to the Hatred of *GOD*.—Now, therefore to accomplish such a mighty *Change*, in the Midst of such *Opposition*, must evidently speak a *Divine Interposition*. And surely he *Christian*, when thus recovered and restored, has Reason to declare, as *Israel* did, *If it had not been the LORD, who was on our Side, when these confederate Enemies rose up against us; then they had swallowed us up quick, when their Wrath was kindled against us.; then the Waters had overwhelmed us, the Stream had gone over our Soul; then the proud Waters had gone over our Soul<sup>t</sup>*, and would have quenched and buried every Spark that looked like *Divine Life*, and have borne away every Purpose of Reformation and Holiness. The Remark will be further illustrated, if we consider,

[4.] “ By what *feeble Means* this *Change* “ is accomplish'd.”

*T H E Apostle observes, that in his Day they had the Treasure of the Gospel lodged in Earthen Vessels, that the Excellency of the Power which render'd it successful, might appear to be of *GOD*, and not of Man<sup>u</sup>.* And it is still in a great Measure apparent, that the same Method is made use of from the same Principle. *The Weapons of our Warfare*

<sup>t</sup> Psal. cxxiv. 1,—5.

<sup>u</sup> 2 Cor. iv. 7.

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*Warfare are not carnal*; and if at any Time they are mighty and effectual, it must be *only thro' GOD*. It is *not by Secular Might or Power*, that this great *Work* is accomplished: No, nor by the Refinements of *Learning*, or the Charms of *Eloquence*. These Things indeed have their Use; the *Understanding* may sometimes be convinced by the one, and the *Affections* moved by the other: Yet where both these have been done, *the Work* often drops short; and it may be, the plainest Addresses, from a weak and almost trembling Tongue, shall perform *that* which the far superior Talents of many have not been able to effect. A Multitude of such Instances have been found, and perhaps seldom in these latter Ages more observable, than in the Compass of our own Observation.

Now whenever *this Work* is accomplished by the Preaching of the *Gospel* in a *Christian Country*, there is generally *some Circumstance*, that shews it is a *Divine*, and not an *Human Work*. It is not the *Novelty* of the *Doctrine* which strikes; for all the ~~mar~~ *Truths*, on which the Conviction and Impression turns, have been known even from early *Infancy*. No *Miracles* awaken the Attention; no *New Discoveries* astonish the Mind: But what has a Thousand Times been

been heard, and as often neglected, breaks in upon the Mind with an almost irresistible *Energy*, and strikes it as if it never ~~had~~<sup>had</sup> been heard of before. They seem, as it were, *when the Lord turneth again their Captivity*, to awaken out of a *Dream*, and wonder at the Accident that has awakened them. The *Ministry of the Word* may seem but *feeble*, when compared to such an Event; and yet sometimes, even less solemn Methods than *that* shall be effectual. One single *Text of Scripture* accidentally occurring to the Sight or Thought, one serious *Hint* dropped in Conversation, shall strike the Mind, and pierce it through with an *Energy*, that plainly shews, that from whatever *feeble Hand* it might seem to come, it was shot out of the *Quiver of GOD*, and intended by him that made the *Heart* to reach it: Since there is almost as much *Disposition* between the *Cause* and the *Effect*, as between *Moses lifting up his Rod*, and the *dividing of the Water of the Sea before Israel*<sup>2</sup>. In many Instances, remarkable *Providences*, which one would have thought should have struck the Soul as it were to the Centre, have produced no *Effect*; and yet the *Word*, or a *Thought*, has accomplished it: And after the *Whirlwind*, the *Earthquake*, and the *Fire*, have made their successive Efforts

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<sup>1</sup> Psal. cxxvi. 1.<sup>2</sup> Exod. xiv. 16.

*SER.* A View that GOD's Hand is in it. 221  
in vain, it has appear'd that the Lord has been in the still small Voice<sup>a</sup>. On the whole, a Variety of Circumstances may illustrate the Matter in different Degrees; but taking it in a General View, the Remark appears to be well founded, "that the Weakness of the Means, by which the Saving Change is wrought, argues plainly, that the Hand of GOD is in it;" as when anointing the Eyes with Spittle, gave Sight to the Blind<sup>b</sup>, it was evidently the Exertion of a Miraculous Power.—But now, agreeably to what has been advanced under these several Heads, I shall proceed to shew at large,

[5.] "THAT the Scripture teaches us, to ascribe this great Change on the Mind to a Divine Agency and Operation."

AND here you will see, that it does not merely drop here and there an Expression, which is capable of such an Interpretation; but that the whole Tenor of the Word of GOD leads to such a Conclusion: And surely, if we own the Word to be Divine, we need no more convincing Argument of the Truth of this Remark. The only Difficulty I shall here find, will be like that which occur'd under the former Head, and proceeds from the

<sup>a</sup> 1 Kings xix. 11, 12.

<sup>b</sup> John ix. 6.

the Variety and Multiplicity of Texts, which offer themselves to me, while reflecting on this Subject: However I will endeavour to rank them in the plainest and best Order I can, under the following *Particulars*.—We find, GOD sometimes promises to produce such a Change in Mens Minds; — and at other Times he speaks of it as his own Work, when it has been already produced:—The Scripture represents even the Increase of Piety in a Regenerate Heart, as the Effect of a Divine Power, and how much more must the first, Implanting of it be so:— Nay, it goes yet further than this, and expresses the Necessity, as well as the Reality, of a Divine Influence on the Mind, to make it truly religious, and resolves the Want of true Religion into this, that GOD with-holds his Influence.— If therefore any one, and much more if all these Particulars can be made out, I think it must force a Conviction on your Judgments at least, that what we are endeavouring to confirm in this Discourse is, the Doctrine of Scripture.

I. THERE are various Places in Scripture, wherein “GOD promises to produce such a Change in Mens Minds, as we have before describ'd;” which plainly shews, that it is to be acknowledg'd as his Work.

Thus

THUS Moses says to *Israel*, without all doubt by the Divine Direction, *The Lord thy GOD will circumcise thy Heart, and the Heart of thy Seed, to love the Lord thy GOD with all thy Heart, and with all thy Soul, that thou mayst live*<sup>c</sup>. And this *Circumcision of the Heart* must surely be the Removal of some Insensibility and Pollution adhering to it, and bringing it to a more orderly, regular, obedient State : Which as it is sometimes made Matter of *Exhortation*, and thus indeed proves that there is a View, in which it may be consider'd as a *Duty* incumbent upon us ; (as when *Moses* said, *Circumcise the Fore-skin of your Heart*<sup>d</sup> ; and *Jeremiah*, in Imitation of him, *Circumcise yourselves to the Lord, and take away the Fore-skin of your Heart*<sup>e</sup>;) so here it is put in the Form of a *Promise*, to signify that wherever it was done, it was in Consequence of *GOD's* preventing and assisting *Grace*.—On the same Principle, the Father promises to *Christ*, *Thy People shall be willing in the Day of thy Power*<sup>f</sup> : And if any pretend, that these Words may possibly admit of another *Version*, tho' I know none more just than this ; there are many other parallel Places, which are not attended with any Ambiguity at

<sup>c</sup> Deut. xxx. 6.<sup>d</sup> Deut. x. 16.<sup>e</sup> Jer. iv. 4.<sup>f</sup> Psal. cx. 3.

224      *GOD promises to produce*,<sup>3</sup> *Ex. 7.*  
at all.—Such, in particular, is that gracious  
*Promise*, (which, tho' it was immediately  
made to the *House of Israel*, is nevertheless,  
quoted by the *Apostle*, as expressive of God's  
*Gospel-Covenant* with all Believers;) *After  
those Days, saith the Lord, I will put my Law  
in their Inward Parts, and write it in their  
Hearts, and I will be their GOD, and they  
shall be my People*<sup>e</sup>: Or as it is elsewhere  
express'd by the same Prophet *Jeremiah*, *I  
will give them one Heart, and one Way, that  
they may fear me for ever; and I will put my  
Fear in their Hearts, that they shall not de-  
part from me*<sup>h</sup>.—And *Ezekiel* echo's back  
the same Language, by the same Spirit; *I  
will give them one Heart, and I will put a new  
Spirit within you; and I will take the Stony  
Heart out of their Flesh, and will give them  
an Heart of Flesh; that they may walk in my  
Statutes, and keep mine Ordinances, and do  
them*<sup>i</sup>: Which is afterwards repeated again,  
almost in the same Words; *A new Heart  
also will I give you, and a new Spirit will I  
put within you; and I will take away the Stony  
Heart out of your Flesh, and I will give you an  
Heart of Flesh; and I will put my Spirit  
within you, and cause you to walk in my  
Statutes, and ye shall keep my Judgments, and  
do them*<sup>k</sup>.—Now such a Transformation of  
the

<sup>e</sup> *Jer. xxxi. 33. Heb. viii. 10.*      <sup>h</sup> *Jer. xxxii. 39, 40.*      <sup>i</sup> *Ezek. xi. 19, 20.*      <sup>k</sup> *Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 27..*

the Heart and Spirit, as may be represented by a thorough Renovation, or by changing Stone into Flesh, speaks the Doctrine I am asserting, in as plain Terms as we could contrive or express; and beautifully points out at once the Greatness and Excellency of the Change, and the Almighty Power by which it is effected; for we may assure ourselves, GOD would never promise such Influences, if he did not really mean to impart them. But again,

2. AGREEABLY to the Tenor of these Promises, " the Scripture also ascribes " this Work to a Divine Agency, when " it is effected."

THUS the Apostle John, when he is speaking of those who on receiving Christ become the Sons of GOD, declares concerning them, that they were born, not of Blood, nor of the Will of the Flesh, nor of the Will of Man, but of GOD<sup>1</sup>; plainly intimating, that it was to him, and not only, or chiefly to themselves, or others, that this happy Change was to be ascribed; which is well explained by those Words of St. James, in which he says, Of his own Will begat he us with the Word of Truth, that we should be a Kind of First-fruits of his Creatures<sup>m</sup>.—Ac-

<sup>1</sup> John i. 13.   <sup>m</sup> James i. 18.

• . . . . Q

cordingly

226 *The Change is ascribed to him, Sect. 7.*  
cordingly our Lord, as you have heard at large; insists upon it, as absolutely necessary to a Man's entering into the Kingdom of GOD, not only that he should be born again, but more particularly, that he should be born of the Spirit<sup>a</sup>, i. e. by the Sanctifying Influence of the Spirit of GOD, operating upon his Soul, to purify and cleanse it.— And as this great Work of *Regeneration* chiefly consists in being brought to *Faith* and *Repentance*, you may observe, that each of these are spoken of as a *Divine Production* in the Mind, or as the *Gift of GOD* to it. Thus the believing Jews, with one Consent, express'd their Conviction, when they heard the Story of *Cornelius*, and declare, *Then has GOD also to the Gentiles granted Repentance unto Life<sup>b</sup>*. And so the Apostle Paul expresses it, when speaking of the Possibility that some might be recovered out of the Snare of the Devil, he says, *If GOD peradventure will give them Repentance to the acknowledging of the Truth<sup>c</sup>*. That very Attention to the Gospel, which is the First Step towards the Production of *Faith* in the Soul, is resolved into this, when it is said, that the Lord opened ~~Egypt's~~ Heart, that she attended to the Things which were spoken by Paul<sup>d</sup>: And with Regard to the

<sup>a</sup> John iii. 3, 5.      <sup>b</sup> Acts xi. 18.      <sup>c</sup> 2 Tim.  
ii. 25, 26.      <sup>d</sup> Acts xvi. 14.

the Progress of it, it is not only said in General, *You hath he quickned, who were dead in Trespasses and Sins*; but *Faith expressly is declared to be the Gift of GOD*<sup>1</sup>; and the Apostle says to the *Philippians*, that it was given to them to believe<sup>1</sup>: Nay, it is represented as a most glorious and illustrious Effort of *Divine Power*, and ascribed<sup>2</sup> to the exceeding Greatness of his Power towards them that believe, according to the working of his mighty Power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the Dead<sup>1</sup>.—And in this View it is, that *this Change* is called a *New Creation*<sup>2</sup>; plainly implying, as a celebrated Writer well expresses it, “that some thing must here be done in us, and for us, which cannot be done by us.” Wherefore 'tis said, that *the New Man is renewed in Knowledge, after the Image of him that created him*<sup>3</sup>; and *we are his Workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good Works*<sup>4</sup>: Not to insist upon the great Variety of parallel Passages, in which the same Thoughts are expressed, almost in the very same Words. But he indeed, who would reckon up all the *Scriptures*, both in the *Old* and *New Testament*, which directly or indirectly refer to this, must transcribe a larger Part of both, than would be convenient to read

Q 2

at

\* Ephes. ii. 1, 8.      <sup>1</sup> Phil. i. 29.      <sup>1</sup> Ephes. i.  
19, 20.      <sup>2</sup> 2 Cor. v. 17.      <sup>2</sup> Col. iii. 10.      <sup>2</sup> Ephes.  
ii. 10.      .      .

228 *The Increase of Piety is also* SER. 7.  
at one Time in a worshipping Assembly.—  
But we may further, by a very strong Con-  
sequence, infer the Doctrine I am now main-  
taining, from those various Passages of the  
*Sacred Writers*, in which,

3. “THE *Increase of Piety*, in an Heart  
“already regenerated, is spoken of as  
“the *Work of GOD*.”

THUS *David*, even when he felt him-  
self disposed to the most vigorous Pro-  
secution of *Religion*, solemnly declares his  
Dependance upon continued *Divine In-  
fluences*, to enable him to execute the holy  
Purpose he was then most affectionately  
forming: *I will run the Way of thy Com-  
mandments*, says he, *when thou shalt enlarge  
my Heart*<sup>y</sup>, or when thou shalt influence it  
with a steady Principle of Zeal, and with  
those devout Passions which may make  
every Branch of my Duty easy and delight-  
ful.—And the Apostle *Paul* declares his  
Persuasion, that *GOD* would continue those  
gracious Influences, which he had already  
imparted: *He that has begun a good Work  
in you, will perform it until the Day of JESU  
S CHRIST*<sup>z</sup>. And when he speaks of the  
ardent *Desire*, with which *Christians* were  
aspiring towards a better World, he adds,

*He*

<sup>y</sup> Psal. cxix. 32.      <sup>z</sup> Phil. i. 6.

*He that has wrought us for the self-same Thing, is GOD<sup>a</sup>.* Thus also he ascribes his continued Fidelity in the Ministry, to the Grace of GOD that was with him, as being one that had obtained Mercy of the Lord to be faithful<sup>b</sup>: And by the Grace of GOD, says he, *I am what I am*; and if *I have laboured more abundantly than others*, it is not *I*, but the Grace of GOD which was with me<sup>c</sup>. On the same Principle he acknowledges, that the Success of Apollos in watering, as well as his own in planting, was to be referred to this, that GOD gave the Increase, in the one Case, as well as the other<sup>d</sup>. And he concludes his Epistle to the Hebrews, with this remarkable Prayer; *The GOD of Peace make you perfect in every good Work to do his Will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his Sight, through Jesus Christ<sup>e</sup>.* — But indeed, as every Prayer that the Apostles offer for any of their Christian Brethren and Friends, that they may grow in Grace, might be urged for the Illustration of this Head, I chuse rather to refer the rest to your own Observation on this general Hint, than to enter into a more particular Enumeration. I shall only add, to compleat the Argument,

Q 3

• 4. THAT

<sup>a</sup> 2 Cor. v. 5.      <sup>b</sup> 1 Cor. vii. 25.      <sup>c</sup> 1 Cor. xv. 10.      <sup>d</sup> 1 Cor. iii. 6, 7.      <sup>e</sup> Heb. xiii. 21.

4. THAT the Scripture often declares  
 " the Necessity, as well as the Reality  
 " of such Influences, and refers the  
 " Ruin of Man to this Circumstance,  
 " that *GOD* in his righteous Judgment  
 " had with-held or withdrawn them."

WHEN Moses would upbraid the Obstinacy of the *Israelites*, that all the Profusion of Wonders wrought for them in *Egypt*, and in the *Wilderness*, had not produced any suitable Impressions; so much was he accustomed to think of every *Thing Good*, in the Moral, as well as in the Natural World, as the *Gift of GOD*, that he uses this remarkable Expression; *Yet the Lord hath not given you an Heart to perceive, and Eyes to see, and Ears to hear unto this Day*<sup>f</sup>.—And our *Lord*, the Propriety of whose Expressions surely none can arraign, speaks to the same Purpose, when adoring the Divine Conduct with respect to the Dispensation of Saving Light, and of Gospel Blessings, he says, *I thank thee, O Father, Lord of Heaven and Earth, that thou hast hid these Things from the Wise and Prudent, and hast revealed them unto Babes: Even so, Father, for so it seemed Good in thy Sight*<sup>g</sup>. If some of the plainest and lowest of the People, who were in Comparison

<sup>f</sup> Deut. xxix. 4.

<sup>g</sup> Matti. xi. 25, 26.

SER. 7. if he with-holds his Influence. 231  
parion to others but as little Children, under-  
stood and received the *Gospel*, while the  
*Learned Men* and *Politicians* of the Age de-  
spised it, *GOD revealed it* to the former,  
while he suffered the *Veil of Prejudice* to  
remain on the Mind of the latter, tho' his  
Almighty Hand could easily have removed  
it.—Those other Words of our *Lord*<sup>h</sup> must  
not be omitted here, in which he says, *No*  
*Man can come unto me, except the Father which*  
*bath sent me, draw him*<sup>h</sup>: And what this  
*drawing of the Father* means, he himself has  
explain'd by saying, *No Man can come unto*  
*me, except it be given him of my Father*<sup>i</sup>;  
and elsewhere he expresses it by *learning of*  
*the Father*<sup>k</sup>; all which must undoubtedly  
signify a *Divine Agency* and *Influence* on the  
Mind.—Nay, a more forcible Expression  
than this, is made use of by the *Evangelist*,  
where he takes Notice of the *Unbelief* of  
those that saw the *Miracles of Christ*, *There-*  
*fore they could not believe, because that Esaias*  
*said, He has blinded their Eyes, and hardned*  
*their Hearts*<sup>l</sup>: Which is agreeable to that  
Expression of the Apostle *Paul*, *He has*  
*Merty on whom he will have Mercy, and*  
~~whom~~<sup>m</sup> *he will, he hardneth*<sup>m</sup>: A Thought,

Q 4

which

<sup>h</sup> John vi. 44.   <sup>i</sup> Ver. 65.   <sup>k</sup> Ver. 45.   <sup>l</sup> John  
xii. 39, 40.   <sup>m</sup> Rom. ix. 18.

232 *Regeneration must proceed* SER. 7.  
which the *Apostle* pursues at large through  
the following Verses.

THESE, to be sure, are very *emphatical* *Scriptures*: And tho' it is necessary to understand them in such a *qualified Sense*, as to make them consistent with *other Scriptures*, which charge *Mens Destruction*, not on any *necessitating Decree of GOD*, but upon *themselves*, and the Abuse of their own Faculties: Yet still these Expressions must stand for something; and in the most *moderate Sense* that can be put upon them, they directly confirm what I have here brought them to prove. So that on the whole, the Matter must come to this, "That the Cause of " *Mens final and everlasting Ruin* may be re- "ferr'd, in one View of it, to *GOD's with- holding* those gracious *Influences*, which if "they had been imparted, would indeed "have subdued the greatest *Perverseness*: "But his *with-holding these Influences*, is not "merely an arbitrary Act, but the *just Punishment* of Mens Wickedness, and of their "obstinate Folly, in trifling with the Means "of his Grace, and *grieving his Spirit*, till "it was provok'd to *withdraw*." This Thought, which I might largely prove to you to be a *Compendium* of the *Scripture Scheme*, reconciles all; and any Consequences drawn from one Part of that *Scheme*, to the Denial

Denial of the other, how plausible' soever, must certainly be false.

I HOPE, what I have here said may be sufficient to fix a *Conviction* in your Judgments and Consciences, "that *Regeneration* is ultimately to be referred to a *Divine Influence* upon the Soul;" or, as the *Apostle* expresses it in the *Text*, that *GOD saves us of his Mercy, by the Washing of Regeneration, and Renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour.*

I SHALL conclude with Two or Three *Reflections*, which tho' so exceeding *obvious*, I shall touch upon, in regard to their great *Importance*, without offering, as I might, to dilate on each of them at large.

(I.) LET those who have experienc'd this *Divine Change* in their Souls, give *GOD the Glory of it.*

PERHAPS there are many of you, who may see peculiar Reason to do it: Perhaps you may be conscious to yourselves, that *The Arm of the Lord* was remarkably *revealed*, in conquering very sensible *Opposition*, and getting itself the *Victory*, even when you seemed, as if you had been resolutely bent upon

upon your own Destruction, to struggle to the utmost against the *Operations* of his Grace on your Soul. Others may perhaps have perceived the *Strength* of the *Divine Agency*, in the *Slightness* of the *Occasion*, or in the *Weakness* of the *Means*, by which He wrought; which indeed is often Matter of *Astonishment* to those, that seriously reflect upon it. But whatever your *Inclinations* may have appeared, and whatever *Means* or *Instruments* were used, give GOD the Glory of all.

If you have found yourselves from your early Years, *inclined* to attend to Divine Things, and susceptible of tender *Impressions* from them; that *Attention*, and those *Impressions* were to be resolved into this, that GOD prevented you with the Blessings of his Goodness. If you have enjoy'd the most excellent *publick Ordinances*, even with all the concurrent *Advantages* that the most pressing *Exhortations*, and the most edifying *Example* of Parents, Ministers, and Companions could give; it was *Divine Providence* that furnished you with those *Advantages*, and *Divine Grace* that added *Efficacy* to them: Else they had only served, to display their own *Weakness*, even where they might have appeared most *powerful*, and to illustrate that *Insensibility*, or *Obstinacy*.

*Obstinacy of Heart*, which would have rendered you *Proof* against all. You do well indeed to honour those, whom GOD has blessed as the *Means* of your Spiritual Edification: But if they think aright, it would grieve them to the very Heart, to have those Applauses given, and those Acknowledgments made to *them*, which are due to GOD alone. All they have done is so little, that it deserves not the Mention; and the greater Attainments they have made in Religion, the more cordially will they join with the holy Apostle in saying, *Neither is he that planteth, any Thing, neither he that watereth; but GOD that giveth the Increase*<sup>n</sup>.

(2.) WE may further infer, that they who attempt the *Conversion* of Sinners, should do it with an humble Dependance on the Co-operation of Divine Grace.

OTHERWISE they will probably find themselves fatally disappointed; and after their most skillful or most laborious Attempts, they will complain, that they have laboured in vain, and spent their Strength for Nought<sup>o</sup>, and find Reason to say, *The Bellows are burnt, and the Lead is consumed*  
of

236 Conversion should be attempted SER. 7.  
of the Fire, yet the Dross is not taken away<sup>p</sup>.  
A Dependance upon GOD in all the common Affairs of Life becomes us, as we are Creatures; and it is most necessary, that we should in all our Wars acknowledge him, as we expect, or desire<sup>q</sup> that he should direct or prosper our Pat<sup>r</sup>s<sup>q</sup>: But the greater the Undertaking is, the more solemn should the Acknowledgement of GOD be.

LET me therefore especially recommend this to those, who are coming forth as young Officers in the Army of Christ. See to it, my Brethren, that in the Name of your GOD, you set up your Banners<sup>r</sup>; that you apply from Time to Time to your publick Work, with a deep Conviction upon your Minds, that no Strength of Reason will effectually convince, that no Eloquence will effectually persuade, unless he that made Mens Hearts will plead his own Cause, and bow those Hearts in humble Subjection. With these Views, I have often known the feeblest Attempts successful, and the Meek and Lowly have out of Weakness been made Strong<sup>r</sup>; while, for Want of this, all the Charms of Composition and Delivery have been at best but like the lovely Song of one that has a pleasant Voice, or the Art of one

that

<sup>p</sup> Jer. vi. 29.      <sup>q</sup> Prov. iii. 6,      <sup>r</sup> Psal. xx.

<sup>q</sup> Heb. xi. 34.

that can play well on an Instrument<sup>c</sup>. It is those that honour **GOD** by the most cordial Dependance upon him, that he delights to honour<sup>w</sup>: And I will presume to say, that it is the *Inward Conviction* of this important Truth, which I feel upon my Soul, while I am confirming it to you, that encourages me to hope, that this *Labour shall not be in vain in the Lord<sup>w</sup>*, but that a *Divine Blessing* shall evidently attend what has already been delivered, and what shall further be spoke. Only let me conclude my present Discourse with this one necessary *Caution*,

(3.) THAT you do not abuse this Doctrine of the Necessity of Divine Influences, which from the *Word of GOD* has been so abundantly confirmed.

**GOD** does indeed *act upon us* in order to produce this happy *Change*; but he *acts upon us* in a Manner suitable to our Rational Nature, and not as if we were mere *Machines*. *He saves us*, as the Scripture expresses it, by awakening *us* to *save ourselves*<sup>x</sup>: *A New Heart does he give us, and a New Spirit does he put within us<sup>y</sup>*, to stir *us* up to be solicitous to *make ourselves a*

*New*

<sup>i</sup> Ezek. xxxiii. 32.   <sup>ii</sup> 1 Sam. ii. 30.   <sup>w</sup> 1 Cor. xv. 28.   <sup>x</sup> Acts ii. 40.   <sup>y</sup> Ezek. xxxvi. 26.

*New Heart and a New Spirit*<sup>a</sup>: He circumcises our Heart to love him<sup>a</sup>, by engaging us to take away the Fore-skin of our Hearts<sup>b</sup>. You see the Correspondency of the Phrases, and it is of great Importance that you attend to it!—If any therefore say, “I will sit still, and attempt nothing for my own Recovery, till GOD irresistibly compels me to it;” he seems as like to perish, as that Man would be, who seeing the House in Flames about him, should not attempt to make his Escape, till he felt himself moved by a *Miracle*. Sirs, the Dependance of the *Creature* on GOD, tho’ it be especially, yet it is not only in *Spiritual Affairs*: It runs through all our Interests and Concerns. We as really depend upon his Influence to stretch out our Hands, as we do to raise our Hearts toward him in *Prayer*. Your Fields could no more produce their Fruit without his Agency, than his Word could, without it, become fruitful in your Hearts: Yet you plow and sow; and would look upon him as a *Madman*, that upon this Principle should decline it, urging, that no Crop could be expected, if GOD did not produce it; and that if he pleased to produce it, it would come up without any

Human

<sup>a</sup> Ezek. xviii. 31.      <sup>b</sup> Deut. xxx. 6.      <sup>c</sup> Jer.  
iv. 4.

Human Labour. The Argument is just the same in that Case, as when Men plead for the Neglect of Means or Endeavours, from the Reality and Necessity of a Divine Concurrence. And if they apply this Argument to the Concerns of their Souls, when they do not apply it to those of their Bodies, it plainly shews, that they regard their Bodies more than their Souls; and that in pretending to make these Excuses they *bely their Conscience*, and act against the secret Conviction of their own Heart. Such Persons do not deserve to be disputed with, but rather should be solemnly admonished of the Danger of such egregious Trifling, where Eternity is at Stake. And sure I am, that it is offering a great Affront to the Memory of the blessed Paul, when Men pretend to encourage themselves in this perverse Temper from any Thing he has said. For when he gives us, as it were, the Substance of all I have now been saying, in those comprehensive Words, *It is GOD that worketh in you, both to will, and to do, of his good Pleasure*; he is so far from mentioning it as any Excuse for Remissness and Sloth, that he introduces it professedly in the very contrary View, as encouraging us to exert ourselves with the utmost

240 *Grace should put us upon Action.* SER. 7.  
most Vigour in a *Dependance* upon that *Divine Operation*. And therefore, as he there expresses it, I say with him, *Work out your own Salvation with Fear and Trembling*; and if you will not do it, you have Reason to tremble in the Prospect of a final *Condemnation* from *G O D*, aggravated by your having thus irrationally and ungratefully *abused* the Revelation of his *Grace*.



S E R.



## S E R M O N VIII.

'Of the VARIOUS METHODS of the  
DIVINE OPERATION in the Pro-  
duction of this Saving Change.

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I COR. xii. 6.

—*There are Diversities of Opera-  
tions, but it is the same GOD,  
which worketh all in all.*

W HATEVER the Original Sense of these Words was, and how peculiarly soever they may relate to the *Miraculous Gifts of the Holy Spirit*, the whole Tenor of the Discourse now intended will shew, with how much Propriety they may, at least, be accommodated to the *Operations of his Grace*. I have proved to you in the last of these *Lectures*, that where-ever *Regeneration* is produced, it is ultimately to be ascribed to ~~a Divine Agency~~; and tho' I cannot say, R. it

242      *Regeneration is wrought*    SER. 8.  
it is equally important, yet I apprehend  
it may be both agreeable and useful to pro-  
ceed,

FIFTHLY, To survey the *Variety* of those  
*Methods*, which *GOD* is pleased to take in  
producing this happy *Change*: Or, to bor-  
row the Language of the *Text*, to consider  
the *Diversity* of *Operations*, by which *the same GOD*, who worketh all in all, (i. e. who  
produces all the Virtues and Graces of the  
*Christian Character*, in some Degree, in all  
his People,) is pleased, according to his own  
wise and gracious Purposes, to proceed *in his Agency* on those whom he regenerates  
and saves.

AND this *Survey* will not be Matter of  
mere *Curiosity*, but may probably *revive the Hearts* of some amongst you by the Recol-  
lection of your own Experience: And it  
may be a *Caution* to others, who for Want  
of due Compass and Extent of Thought  
and Knowledge, are ready to argue, as if  
*GOD* had but *one Way* to work on the Hu-  
man Heart, and *that one* the particular Man-  
ner by which he recovered *them*. Of this  
I shall speak more largely hereafter. In the  
mean Time, I judged it necessary <sup>as</sup> to pre-  
mise *this Hint*, to direct us ~~as~~ to the *Temper*  
with which this Discourse should be heard,

as well as to the Purpose to which it is to be improved.

Now what I have to offer on this Subject, will be ranged under these *Three Heads*. There is a *Diversity* and *Variety* observable—in the *Time*,—the *Occasion*,—and the *Manner*, of the *Divine Operations* on the Soul.

I. THERE is an observable *Variety*, “ as “ to the *Time* of God’s gracious *Ope-*  
“ *rations* on different Persons.” ”

SOME are called in their *Infancy* :—Others, and these perhaps the greatest Part, are wrought upon in *Youth* : — And some very few in the *Advance*, and even in the *Decline* of Life.

I. SOME are wrought upon by *Divine Grace* “ in their *Infancy*.”

THIS is often the Case ; and I doubt not, but if *Parents* were to do their Duty, it would much more frequently be so. And it is an Honour which GOD is pleased, in some Instances, remarkably to confer on a good *Education* ; which is indeed so important a *Duty* on one Side, and so great a *Privilege* on the other, that it is the less to be wondered at, that he so mercifully encourages

*Christian Parents* in the Discharge, of it, thus granting, as it were, an immediate Reward for this *Labour of Love*. And I must here take the Freedom, on my own Observation, to say, that God seems especially to own the faithful Endeavours of pious Mothers in this Respect. He has wisely and graciously given that Sex a peculiar Tenderness of Address, and an easy and insinuating Manner, which is admirably adapted to this great End, for which no doubt he especially intended it, that of conveying Knowledge to Children, and making tender Impressions on their Minds: And there is hardly any View, in which the Importance of the Sex more evidently appears.

WE have Encouragement to believe, there are a considerable Number, who are as it were *sanctified from the Womb*, and in whom the Seeds of Divine Grace are sown, before they grow up to a Capacity of understanding the publick Preaching of the Word: A Remark, which Mr. Baxter carries so far as to say, " that he believes, if the Duties of Religious Education were conscientiously discharged, Preaching would not be God's ordinary Method of converting Souls; but the greater Part would be wrought upon before they were capable of entering into the Design of a Sermon." And indeed it seems to me, that Children may early come

come to have some *Apprehensions* of what is most important in Religion. They may have a *Reverence* for GOD, and a *Love* for him, as that great *Father* who made them, and that kind *Friend* who gives them every Thing that they have: They may have a *Fear* of doing any Thing that would displease him: And tho' it is not so easy, for them, to understand the *Doctrines* peculiar to a *Redeemer*; yet when they hear of *Christ* as the *Son of GOD*, who *came down from Heaven*, to teach *Men* and *Children* the Way thither; who *loved them*, and *did them good* every Day, and at last *died* to deliver them from *Death* and *Hell*; their little Hearts may well be impressed with such Thoughts as these, and they may find a growing Desire, to be *instructed* in what *Christ* is, and what he taught and did, and to do what shall appear to be his *Will*. And where-ever this is the prevailing Disposition, it seems to me, that the *Seeds of Holiness* are sown in that Soul, tho' but small Proficiency may be made in *Knowledge*, and tho' the Capacities for *Service* may be very low.

I WILL add, that some remarkably pertinent and solid Things, which *little Children* have said concerning *Religion*, seem to me plainly to evidence, that they have been in many Instances under some uncommon *Teachings* of the Divine Spirit: And it

246      *The greatest Part are !* SER. 3.  
seems perfectly suitable to the Genius of Christianity, that in this Sense, GOD should ordain Strength out of the Mouth of Babes and Sucklings<sup>a</sup>, and should, ~~excul~~ to them what he has suffered to be hidden from the Wise and Prudent<sup>b</sup>. Nor can I suppose it hard for any, who have been for a considerable Time acquainted with the State of Religion in Christian Societies, to recollect various Instances, in which Persons thus early taught of GOD, who have heard, and known, and loved the Scriptures, and delighted in Ordinances and serious Discourse from their Childhood, have been in some Measure like Samuel, Obadiab, Jeremiah, Josiah, and Timothy, honoured with eminent Usefulness in the Church, and have happily filled some of its most important Stations of Service. Almost every Age has afforded Instances of this, and I am persuaded many are now growing up amongst us, who will be Instances of it in Ages yet to come.

2. OTHERS, and these perhaps the greatest Part of real Christians, are wrought upon “in their Youthful Days.”

MANY Parents are very deficient in a due Care to cultivate the Infant Minds of their

<sup>a</sup> Psal. viii. 2.

<sup>b</sup> Matth. xi. 25.

SER. 8.] wrought upon in their Youth. 247

their Little Ones ; or the feeble and general Impressions then made, are perhaps worn out and lost, in the growing Vanities of Childhood and Youth. They begin to be drawn away by Evil Inclinations and Examples, and by the Delusions of a flattering World, which then puts on its most attractive Charms, to gain upon their unexperienced Minds : And hereupon they follow after Vanity, and become vain<sup>b</sup> : Of the Rock which begat them, they grow unmindful, and forget the GOD that formed them<sup>c</sup>. But by one Method or another, GOD often stops them in this dangerous Career ; and awakening Ordinances, or more awakening Providences, bring them to a Stand, and turn them the contrary Way. The Terrors of the Lord set themselves in Array against them<sup>d</sup> ; or his Mercy melts their Souls, and they yield themselves its willing Captives. They consecrate their Hearts, warm as they are with Youthful Vigour, to be the Sacrifices of Divine Love, and enter, it may be, very early into the Bonds of God's Covenant ; and so prove such a Seed to serve him, as is accounted to the Lord for a most honourable and useful Generation<sup>e</sup>. Blessed be GOD, I speak to many who know this by Experience ! By far the greater Part of those, who have been admitted to your Com-

R 4 . . . munion,

<sup>b</sup> 2 Kings xvii. 15.   <sup>c</sup> Deut. xxxii. 18.   <sup>d</sup> Job vi. 4.   <sup>e</sup> Psal. xxii. 30.

248     *Some few are wrought upon* | SER. 8.  
munion, since I settled among you, have been  
as I apprehend, under the Age of Twenty-four  
Years: And several of those, who were far-  
ther advanced in Life when they first ap-  
proached the Table of the Lord, had been  
brought to real Religion in their much ear-  
lier Years; tho' particular Circumstances,  
or some mistaken Apprehensions, might pre-  
vent their giving up their Names publickly  
to the Lord, so soon as they might, and as  
they ought to have done it.

3. 'SOME few are wrought upon by Di-  
vine Grace " in the Advance, and even  
" in the Decline of Life."

I CONFESS, that the Number of these is  
comparatively small: And it is not to be  
wonder'd at, that it is so. They are not  
many, who arrive to what can properly be  
called Old Age; and of them, but a very in-  
considerable Part are then brought to any  
Thing which looks like a Saving Change.  
Nor shall we be much surprized at this, if we  
consider the inveterate Nature of bad Habits,  
which render it almost as hard, for them  
*that are accustomed to do Evil, to learn to do Good,* as it is for the Ethiopian to change his  
Skin, or the Leopard his Spots. To such a  
Degree are Prejudices rivetted in the Mind,  
so

so insensible is it render'd of tender and generous Impressions, so cold are the Affections, and the Memory (if the Phrase may be allowed,) so rigid, that humanly speaking, there is much less Probability of their being impress'd with Religion, than there was when they were in the Bloom of Life, notwithstanding all the seeming Advantages which might arise from riper Reason, deeper Experience, and a nearer Prospect of Eternity. In all these Things it is in vain to reason against Observation of Fact, since we evidently see how uncommon a Thing it is, for Persons to be awakened and reformed in Old Age; especially if they have been educated in the Principles of Religion, and have made a florid Profession of it in their Youth, from which they have afterwards apostatized, out of a Love to the Wealth or Honours of the World, or a Relish for sensual Delights. Such Persons generally live and die Monuments of Divine Wrath, bearing as it were, in Characters dreadfully legible, the sad Inscription of thbse, " who having forsaken GOD, are finally forsaken of him." They appear as dry Trees, twise dead, and fit for nothing but to be plucked up by the Roots, and cast into the Fire<sup>h</sup>.

NEVERTHELESS, to prove the Infinite Energy and Sovereignty of Divine Grace,

GOD

*GOD* is sometimes pleased to work even on such.. He touches *the Rock*, which has stood for Ages unmoved, and *the Waters* flow forth : He says to *the dry Bones*, *Live*, and they obey ; they are clothed with *Beauty*, they are animated with *Life*, and stand up as with the Vigour of a *renewed Youth*, to pursue the *Labours of Religion*, and to fight the *Battles of the Lord*<sup>1</sup>. Such Instances, in which *Aged Sinners* have been thus wrought upon, I have read and heard ; tho' (I grieve to say it,) I can recollect *very few*, if *any*, that have occurred to me, within the Sphere of my own personal Observation and Acquaintance.

But besides this *Variety* in the *Time*, there is also,

II. A N observable *Diversity*, “ in ‘the  
“ Occasion, which *Divine Grace* takes  
“ to operate upon different Persons.”

THE *Occasions* are indeed *so various*, that it would be impossible to enumerate them : I shall however just touch on some of the chief.

AND here I might particularly consider a *Religious Education* in this View, and that daily *Converse* with pious Friends, which is

<sup>1</sup> Ezek. xxxvii. 10.

of Course connected with it. But tho' perhaps there may be no *Occasion* more considerable in itself, and none that has been more eminently honoured of GOD; yet it is proper to wave it here, as having been mentioned under the former *Head*, as well as much more largely illustrated in my *Sermons on that Subject*, which are in most of your Houses, and which, I hope, you will often review.

I PROCEEDED therefore farther to observe,— that some are wrought upon by the *Word of GOD*;—others by some remarkable *Providence*;—some by little *Incidents*, which, inconsiderable as they seem in themselves, grow memorable by the noble Effects they are made to produce;—and others by *secret* and *immediate Impressions of GOD* upon their *Spirits*, which cannot be resolved into any *External Cause*, or any *Visible Occasion* at all.

I. “ THE Administration of *Divine Ordinances*, and especially the *Word of GOD and Prayer*,” is an *Occasion*, which he most frequently takes, to work upon Mens Hearts by his *Grace*.

I DO not mention the Administration of the *Sacraments*, upon this Occasion; because, tho' they have so noble and effectual a Tendency to improve Mens Minds in Piety, and to

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to promote *Christian Edification*; yet I do  
not remember to have heard of any Instance,  
in which they have been the *Means* of  
*Mens Conversion*; which is the less to be  
wondered at, as they are appointed for a very  
different End.

THERE are many however that have  
been wrought upon in *Prayer*, as there are  
many Things concur in this to awaken and  
impress the Mind. The Solemn *Acknowl-*  
*edgments* then made of the Divine Perfec-  
tions, the *Praises* offered to his tremendous  
Majesty, the deep and humble *Confession* of  
our various and aggravated Guilt in his holy  
Presence, the *Lamentations* over it, the im-  
portunate *Pleadings* for a Variety of Blessings  
both for Time and Eternity; in a Word,  
all the Overflowings of *pious Affections* in  
the Breast of him that leads the Devotion,  
and especially the *earnest Intreaties* then of-  
fer'd for Unconverted Sinners, the genuine  
*Expressions* of an undissembled Apprehen-  
sion of their Danger, and the fervent *Breath-*  
*ings* after Divine Grace, to be communicated  
to them for their Spiritual Life: All these  
Things, I say, and many more, which oc-  
cur in *Prayer*, when it is managed aright,  
may, by the Divine Blessing, be singularly  
useful. And I am well assured, there have  
been happy Instances, in which *while God's*  
*People*

~~People~~ have yet been speaking to him on this Head, he has graciously heard, and signally answered them <sup>k</sup>.

BUT the *Reading*, and especially the *Preaching of the Word*, is the grand Occasion and Instrument in the *Conversion* of Souls. *Of his own Will he begets them with the Word of Truth*<sup>1</sup>: And it is admirably suited to chose saving *Impressions*, which it is intended to make on the Heart, being quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged Sword <sup>m</sup>. It was while Paul was preaching, that the Lord opened Lydia's Heart, so that she attended to the Things which were spoken by him <sup>n</sup>: And it was while Peter was thus employed, that such vast Multitudes were pricked in their Hearts, and said to him, and to the rest of the Apostles present, Men and Brethren, what shall we do <sup>o</sup>? And I am well persuaded, that, various and lamentable as the Instances are, in which Men stop their Ears, and harden their Hearts against it, GOD does not even to this Day leave it without Witness; but the Terrors of the Lord, as display'd by his faithful Ministers, have subdued their Thousands, and the Riches of his Grace their Ten Thousands, when illustrated by those, who have not only heard, but

<sup>k</sup> Isai. i-v. 24.

<sup>l</sup> Jam. i. 18.

<sup>m</sup> Heb. iv. 12.

<sup>n</sup> Acts xvi. 14.

<sup>o</sup> Acts ii. 37.

but have themselves *tasted* of their Sweetness. •*The Preaching of the Cross may indeed to them that perish be Foolishness*; but blessed be his Name who died upon it, there is still a happy Remnant, to whom it appears to be *the Power of GOD, and the Wisdom of GOD*<sup>p</sup>. *Evangelical Subjects*, when opened with Perspicuity, and inforced with Vigour and Tenderness, by those that have *experi*-rienced the transforming Energy of them on their own Hearts, and desire above all Things to be *wise to win the Souls of others*<sup>q</sup>, are generally the Occasion of producing the most immediate, and the most important *Change*; as I doubt not, but many now present have seen and felt. And the Observation of every Year of Life convinces me more and more, that *they who desire to be signally instrumental in this good Work, this Work, of all others the most benevolent and important, must, in the Account of a vain World, become Fools, that they may be wise*<sup>r</sup>. How contemptuously soever it may be fashionable to treat such *Preaching*, we must make these *Subjects* familiar to our *Hearers*, and must treat them with all Plainness of Speech, and all Seriousness of Address, or we shall generally *labour in vain, and spend our Strength for nought*<sup>s</sup>. Would to God, that *the Teachers*

<sup>p</sup> 1 Cor. i. 18, 24.

<sup>q</sup> Prov. xi. 30.

<sup>r</sup> 1 Cor.

iii. 18.

<sup>s</sup> Isai. xl ix. 4.

of our Israel may consider the Importance of it, and grow wise by such Experiments as these! that they may act the Part of *prudent Physicians*, who prescribe the *Medicines* they find in Fact most useful, and not those concerning which the finest Speculations may be framed. Till then, whatever their *Learning*, *Politeness*, and *Parade* may be, it cannot be expected, that *our Health* should be generally recovered; but we are like to continue, what we have long been, a *vicious People*, amidst the finest *Encomiums of Virtue*, that are any where to be found: Nor will there be much Room to wonder, if some of its most eloquent *Advocates* should appear, even in their own *Practice*, insensible of those Charms which they so gracefully recommend to others, and sink in their Character below those *Heathen Moralists*, whom they may chuse to imitate, rather than *Christ* and his *Apostles*. Nevertheless I am persuaded, that if *G O D* intend Mercy for us as a People, he will support among us a Succession of those, who shall dispense his *Ordinances* in such a *Manner*, as he has generally chosen to honour with Success. But tho' the greater Part of *sincere Converts* are reduced by these, I am to add,

2. THAT "remarkable *Providences*,  
" whether *merciful*, or *afflictive*," are  
" Occasions,

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Occasions, which GOD takes, to work  
upon the Hearts of many others.

WHEN Ordinances have long been attend-  
ed in vain, GOD perhaps interposes by other  
more peculiar and signal Methods, to pluck  
the trifling and lethargick Sinner *as a Fire-  
brand out of the Burning* <sup>t</sup>.

SOMETIMES remarkable *Mercies* and  
*Deliverances* accomplish the Work. An  
Appearance of GOD in their Favour, when  
they are conscious to themselves that they  
are the unworthiest of all his Creatures, shall  
shame and melt them, and powerfully pre-  
vail on their Minds to turn unto the *Lord* ;  
who daily loads them with his Benefits <sup>u</sup>, and  
thus seems, in more Senses than one, to  
send from *Heaven* to save them, and draw  
them out of many *Waters*, in which they had  
otherwise been lost <sup>v</sup>.

BUT we more frequently see, that *Af-  
flictions* are the *Means* of performing this  
happy Work. By a gracious Severity GOD  
is pleased to lay hold on many, and give them  
Reason to bless the Hand, <sup>a</sup> which tho' by a  
rough Motion delivers them from the Flames  
that were kindling around them, and  
shews the *Lord* to be merciful to them <sup>x</sup>. Like  
*Jonah* in the Ship, they are awakened by a  
Storm,

<sup>t</sup> Amos iv. 11.      <sup>u</sup> Psal. lxviii. 19.      <sup>v</sup> Psal.  
xviii. 16.      <sup>x</sup> Gen. xix. 16.

*Storm,* to call upon their *G O D<sup>y</sup>*: Like *Mariasseb*, they are *taken among the Thorns*, and *laid in Fetters*, that they may be brought *to know the Lord<sup>z</sup>*: Like the *Jailor*, they are shaken with *an Earthquake*, and *trembling and astonished* they *fall down*, and enquire, *what they shall do to be saved<sup>x</sup>*? The *terrifying* Fear of the Approach of *Death*, or the *distressing* Weight of some *Calamity* which threatens every Moment to swallow them up in *Destruction*, rouzes their Consciences to an Attention to those Divine Truths which they had long forgotten, and opens those Records of Guilt which they had studiously sealed up.

"AND there seems to be no *Affliction*, by which *God* more frequently works upon *Men*, than by *Sickness*. When he weakens their Capacity for the Business of Life, and spoils their Relish for its Enjoyments; when he confines them to their Chambers, or even to their Beds, and *makes their Chain* streight and *heavy*<sup>y</sup>; when he threatens to *take them away in the Midst* <sup>z</sup> *of their Days*<sup>c</sup>, to deprive them of the *Residue* of their *Years*<sup>d</sup>, and immediately to bring them before that awful Tribunal, for which they know in their own

<sup>x</sup> Jonah i. 6. <sup>y</sup> 2 Chron. xxxiii. 11, 13. <sup>z</sup> Acts xvi. 26.—30. <sup>b</sup> Lam. iii. 7. <sup>c</sup> Pfal. cii. 24.

<sup>d</sup> Isa. xxxviii. 10.

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Consciences they are so ill prepared : Then do we often see the Accomplishment of that Observation, which *Elihu* made so many Ages ago ; *He chasteneth a Man with Pain upon his Bed, and the Multitude of his Bones with strong Pain, so that his Life abhorreth Bread, and his Soul dainty Meat ; his Flesh is consumed away, that it cannot be seen, and his Bones that were not seer, stick out ; yea, his Soul draweth near to the Grave, and his Life to the Destroyers* : But sending him an Interpreter, one among a Thousand, to shew unto Man his Uprightness, then he is gracious to him, and saith, in a Spiritual as well as a Literal Sense, *Deliver him from going down to the Pit, I have found a Ransom*.—Blessed be GOD, Instances of this Kind have been known, and known among us, in which the Sickness of the Body has wrought the Cure of the Soul, under the Conduct of the great Physician of both, and so has proved eminently to the Glory of GOD, and the Good of those, who for a while have been in Heaviness<sup>f</sup>.

YET it must be acknowledgd, that in other Instances, the Remorse which a Man expresses upon a Sick Bed, and in the near Views of Eternity, proves but like that of some condemned Malefactor, who, when he has obtained a Pardon, throws off all these

Appear-

\* Job xxxiii, 19,—24.      f 1 Pet. i. 6.

Appearances of Repentance, with which he had once deceived himself, and perhaps deceived others too, and plunges himself anew into Capital Crimes ; it may be, into Crimes, for which he afterwards suffers Death without those Compunctions of Conscience which he before felt, being harden'd by a Return into Sin attended with such dreadful Aggravations.—This has been the Case of *many* ; and I pray GOD, it may not be thus with *any of you*. But if there be any among you, that were once under powerful Awakenings ; *any*, that have cried out of *Terrors on' every Side* ; that have *confessed your Sins*, it may be, with greater Freedom, and a more particular Detail of Circumstances, than the *Minister* who attended you could have desired, and have *resolved against them* with all the Appearances of the most determinate Purpose ; and yet after all, have *returned with the Sow that was washed, to her wallowing in the Mire* : Such have peculiar Reason to be alarmed and terrified. Every Day of *Divine Patience* toward such is astonishing. And if to all this have been added the Returns of *Danger*, and signal Interpositions of Providence for your *Deliverance*, and yet there be no kindly Impressions of Penitence and Gratitude on your Hearts ; they who know the Particulars of

the Case, must surely look upon you with Horror, as well as with Wonder. For what can one imagine of such, but that they are given over by God, to a *Darkness* which nothing but the *Flames of Hell* can enlighten, and a *Hardness* which nothing can penetrate, but the Sharpness of *unquenchable Fire*, and the Gnawings of the *never-dying Work*? .

BUT to return from a Digression, into which Compassion towards such a deplorable Case has insensibly led me, I would farther observe, that as these various *Interpositions* of a remarkable *Providience* are often the *Means* of working Saving Impressions on Mens Minds, so

3. GOD is sometimes pleased to over-rule  
“ little and inconsiderable *Incidents* in  
“ Life,” as the *Occasion* of accomplishing  
*this happy Change.*

As the *Treasure* of the Gospel was at first put into *Earthen Vessels*, that the Excellency of the Power might appear to be of GOD, and not of Man<sup>i</sup>; so GOD, to make his own *Praise* glorious<sup>k</sup>, is sometimes pleased to produce the most important Effects, by Causes which seem in themselves least considerable. And it is astonishing to see, from how small,

<sup>and</sup>

and seemingly unpromising a Seed, this Plant of Paradise springs up, and with how little Cultivation too in some Instances, after Paul had long attempted in vain to plant, and Apollos to water! —A few Lines in the Bible, or any other good Book, perhaps taken up by Chance, shall be the Instrument; and a Picture, on which the Eye glances without Expectation or Design, shall strike to the Heart, like an Arrow from the Bow of GOD himself, after Quivers of the most pointed and polished Shafts have been exhausted in vain; tho' such Shafts were most skilfully aimed, and most vigorously discharged.—In other Instances, a Word drop'd in Conversation, and that perhaps no way remarkable either for its Spirit or Propriety, shall do that, which the most solemn Ordinances have not been capable of doing: An important Encouragement, by the Way, to abound in Religious Discourse, which God has sometimes been pleased to honour, as the happy Means of saving a Soul from Death, and laying a Foundation for the Delights of an everlasting Friendship with those who have been so recovered.

- 4. SOMETIMES this great Work is accomplish'd, “by secret and immediate Impressions from GOD upon the Mind,”

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without any *Visible Means, Instruments,*  
*or Occasions at all.*

THESE Things do not *frequently happen* ;  
nor does it seem fit they should, lest any  
should be encouraged to expect them in the  
*Neglect of the appointed Means.* Nevertheless it is plain in Fact, that *GOD* is sometimes pleased to *go out of the common Way* ; and his mighty Hand is to be acknowledged in it. The *Reasons* are known to himself ; and the *Praise* is humbly to be ascribed to him, *who giveth not an Account of any of his Matters*<sup>m</sup>.

IT is not, to be sure, so common now, as it was in the Days of *Elihu*, that *GOD* should *speak to Men in a Dream*, or *seal Instructions to them in Slumberings on their Bed*<sup>n</sup>: Yet I have myself known several, who have ascribed their first Religious Awakenings to some awful *Dream*, in which the Solemnity of the Judgment-Day, or a View of the Invisible World, has been represented to them with unspeakable Terror ; and others, to whom, when they have wak'd in the Night, some *Words of Scripture* have occurred with such Power, that they have not been able to divert their Thoughts to any Thing else ; and that, when they themselves

<sup>m</sup> Job xxxiii. 13.

<sup>n</sup> Job xxxiii. 15, 16.

selves have not certainly known, whether they were in the *Bible* or not.

I HAVE known those, that, in the Circle of their vain Companions, and in the Midst of their sensual Delights, have been struck to the very *Heart* with some such *Scripture* as this ; *To be carnally minded is Death* : Or such a *Text* as this has on a sudden darted into their Minds ; *The Wrath of G O D is revealed from Heaven against all Ungodliness and Unrighteousness of Men*. Such Passages have seem'd to ring and thunder in their Ears, till the Sound of their Musick, and the Noise of their Mirth have been quite over-power'd ; so that they have been driven from their Revels to their Knees, and have returned no more into *the Paths of the Destroyer*.

YEA, to add no more Instances of this Kind, I have known those of distinguish'd Genius, polite Manners, and great Experience in Human Affairs, who, after having outgrown all the Impressions of a *Religious Education* ; after having been hardened, rather than subdued, by the most singular *Mercies*, even various, repeated, and astonishing *Deliverances*, which have appeared to themselves no less than miraculous ; after having lived for Years without *G O D in the World*, notoriously corrupt themselves,

and labouring to the utmost to corrupt others ; have been stop'd on a sudden in the full Career of their Sin, and have felt such Rays of the Divine Presence, and of Redeeming Love, darting in upon their Minds, almost like Lightning from Heaven, as have at once rouzed, over-powered, and transformed them : So that they have come out of their secret Chambers with an irreconcilable Enmity to those Vices, to which, when they entered them, they were the tamest and most abandoned Slaves ; and have appeared from that very Hour, the Votaries, the Patrons, the Champions of Religion ; and after a Course of the most resolute Attachment to it, in spite of all the Reasonings, or the Railleries, the Importunities, or the Reproaches of its Enemies, they have continued to this Day, some of its brightest Ornaments : A Change, which I behold with equal Wonder and Delight, and which, if a Nation should join in deriding it, I would adore as the Finger of GOD.

In mentioning these Things thus publickly, I do indeed take an uncommon Freedom, which some may perhaps censure : But so far as Human Testimony can give an Assurance of Truth, I may justly say, that *I speak what I know, and testify what, in its genuine and powerful Effects, I have myself seen*<sup>a</sup>. And since

<sup>a</sup> John iii. 11.

face the Possibility of abusing such Condescensions of Divine Mercy did not prevent their being granted, I cannot think it ought to engage me to be silent, when so natural an Opportunity offered of declaring them, *to the Glory of him who worketh all Things according to the Counsel of his own Will*. Yet I must repeat the *Caution*, which I before suggested, that it would be Madness for any to neglect God's appointed Means of Operation, on Presumption that they shall be added to the small List of those, whq have been such uncommon and astonishing Trophies of the Efficacy and Sovereignty of *Divine Grace*.

THESE Remarks must for the present suffice, with Regard to the various Occasions by which God works upon Mens Minds ; and I hope you will excuse me, if in illustrating some of them, I have a little anticipated some Things, which might have been mentioned under the *Third Head*, in which I proposed,

III. To consider some *Varieties* observable in "the *Manner*, in which *Divine Grace* operates on the Mind."

AND this *Variety*, by the Way, will be observable in many Instances, where the *Occasions*

*Occasions* are in general the same. Thus among those, that are awakened by the *Word of GOD*, or by his *Providence*,—some are shaken by *strong Terrors*; — some are melted into *deep Sorrows*; — others are astonished as it were, and captivated at once, by the *Discovery* of the *Love of GOD in Christ*; — and others are led on by such *gentle and gradual Impressions*, that they can hardly recollect any remarkable *Circumstance* at all, relating to the *Manner* in which this blessed Work was begun, or conducted in their *Sculs*.

I. SOME Converts are “awakened by  
“strong Terrors.”

IT is obvious, that *Conviction of Sin*, in some Degree or another, is absolutely necessary to make Way for the *Entrance of the Gospel* into the Soul. But the *Degrees* are *various* in different Persons; and as for those of whom we now speak, God reproves them aloud, and sets their *Sins* in Order before them<sup>1</sup>, marshals them in dreadful *Array*, as the Expression imports; so that they seem like defenceless Creatures, surrounded with a whole Host of Enemies, whose Weapons are raised for their Destruction. Yea, *GOD* himself, the great, the terrible, the Eternal,

<sup>1</sup> Psal. l. 21.

nat, and Omnipotent GOD, seems to set them up as a Mark for those Arrows<sup>t</sup>; the Poison of which drinketh up their Spirits<sup>u</sup>; and, as he himself expresses it, He is unto them as a Bear, or a Lion, ready to tear and rent the very Caul of their Heart<sup>v</sup>. They come as it were, to the trembling and terrifying Mountain of Sinai, to Blackness, and Darkness, and Tempest<sup>x</sup>. The Conviction of Guilt is attended with such a Sense of the Demerit of Sin, as fills them with Horror and Astonishment, and engages them to wish in the Bitterness of their Souls, that they had never been born. They are left for a Time, and that perhaps for Weeks and Months, to be, as it were, deafen'd with the loud Thunders of the Law: A dreadful Sound, as Eliphaz expresses it, is in their Ears<sup>y</sup>, even the Sentence of their own Damnation; and the awful Curse of an Almighty Sin-avenging GOD comes into their Bowels like Water, and like Oil into their Bones<sup>z</sup>. They are filled with such deep Remorse for their past Sins, that they verily think no Iniquity was ever like theirs, and that no Punishment will be like theirs. They hardly see a Glimmering of Hope, that they shall obtain Deliverance; but expect, in a very little while, to be sealed up under Wrath,

<sup>t</sup> Lam. iii. 12.<sup>u</sup> Job vi. 4.<sup>v</sup> Hos. xiii. 8.<sup>x</sup> Heb. xii. 18.<sup>y</sup> Job xv. 21.<sup>z</sup> Psal. cix. 18.

Wrath, if they are not already so. When they hear<sup>a</sup> the Offers, and the Promises of the Gospel, they can apply none of them to themselves, and find Comfort in none; But every Threatening, and every Curse of the Book of GOD, seems to have been written as their intended Portion. And thus, perhaps they continue for Weeks, or for Months together; expecting every Day and every Night, that Destruction from GOD, which is now a Terror to them<sup>b</sup>, should utterly swallow them up, and leave them neither Root nor Branch, neither Comfort nor Hope.<sup>c</sup> The Law is a School-master to bring them to Christ<sup>d</sup>, and it scourges them with most rigorous Discipline: Yea, the Infernal Lion roars over them, tho' he is not permitted to devour them: He particularly terrifies them, when they think of approaching to GOD, as if they were to meet with some peculiar Danger there, where alone they can find their Relief: Or if they do in broken Accents utter their Prayer before GOD, it seems to be shut out<sup>e</sup>, and they are apprehensive that it is turned into Sin<sup>f</sup>. Yet there is one Thing to be observed in the Midst of this Scene of Horror, and it is a Circumstance of great Importance; " that they justify GOD, when he seems most inexorable, and subscribe to that

" Sen-

<sup>a</sup> Job xxxi. 23.

<sup>b</sup> Mal. iv. 1.

<sup>c</sup> Gal. iii. 21.

<sup>d</sup> Lam. iii. 8.

<sup>e</sup> Psal. cix. 7.

“ Sentence as righteous, which dooms them  
“ to Eternal Ruin.”

~~2.~~ OTHERS are “ melted into deep Sor-  
rows”.

THEIR Eyes run down with Tears ; and they are ready to wish, that their Head were Waters, and their Eyes Fountains, that they might continue to weep Day and Night<sup>f</sup>. They see the Evil of Sin, and the Misery to which it hath reduced them in a most deplorable View ; and it may be, while those described under the former Head are ready to tremble, because they cannot weep, these are ready to weep, because they cannot tremble. They lament, among other Things, the Want of those strong Horrors, which some have felt : They cry out, “ Woe is me, “ for I am undone<sup>g</sup> ; I have destroyed myself, “ and in myself is not my Help found<sup>h</sup> : ” And it may be, they are a considerable Time before they can persuade themselves, there is any Help for them, even in GOD. They know there is Help in him through Christ for penitent and believing Sinners : But they cannot easily be convinced, that they believe ; because they do not feel that confident Trust, which some others have much sooner been brought to : And they are afraid, lest whatever they expe-

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experience which looks like *Repentance*,  
should be only the false Appearance of it,  
proceeding from mere Self-Love, and a natural  
Dread of Future Misery. They dwelt  
perpetually on the *dark Side of Things*:  
They read over the Catalogue of their  
*Iniquities* again and again, and attend to  
those Passages, in which the *Wrath of GOD*  
*is revealed from Heaven against every Kind*  
and Degree of *Sin*; while they are *slow of Heart* to admit those reviving *Consolations*,  
which the various rich and precious *Promises*  
of the *Gospel* are so admirably well calcu-  
lated to administer.

THE State of such Souls, when they are *first savinely enlightened*, is like that of the *Earth*, when *Fogs and Mists* have veiled the Face of the *Sun*, after it is risen. But it very often happens, with respect to such Souls, that, when these *Mists* are at length dispersed, a very bright and cheerful *Day* opens: They are comforted by the warmer Beams of the *Sun of Righteousness*, according to the Hours in which they have been *beclouded*, and are *made glad*, according to the Days in which they were *afflicted*: 'And going on to fear the *Lord*, and to obey the *Voice of his Servant*, tho' they have long walked in *Darkness*, and seen no *Light*, they are at length encouraged by his Spirit ill-  
forcing.

<sup>i</sup> Rom. i. 18.      <sup>k</sup> Psal. xc. 15.

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forcing the Exhortations of his Word, to  
trust in the Name of the Lord, and stay them-  
selves upon their GOD<sup>1</sup>.

• 3. SOME are “captivated with astonish-  
“ ing and delightful *Views of the Love*  
“ *of GOD in Christ.*”

• THERE is always, as we observed before,  
in the *awakened Soul*, some *Conviction of*  
*Sin*, and *Apprehension of Danger*; neverthe-  
• less there are Instances, in which *GOD heals*  
almost as soon as he *wounds*, and *speaks Peace*  
almost as soon as he *speaks Trouble*. He gra-  
ciously shortens, to some Souls, the *Pangs*  
of the *New Birth*, and gives them *Beauty for*  
*Asbes*, the *Oil of Joy for Mourning*, and the  
• *Garment of Praise for the Spirit of Heav-*  
*iness*<sup>m</sup>. The *News of Salvation, by the Blood,*  
and *Righteousness*, and *Grace of Christ*, is re-  
ceived with so thankful a Sense, with so  
joyful a Compliance, that the Soul, feeling  
beyond all Doubt, the cordial Sincerity with  
which it embraces the Offer, is filled with  
*Joy unspeakable, and full of Glory*<sup>n</sup>: The  
Heart does magnify the Lord, and the Spirit  
rejoices in *GOD its Saviour*<sup>o</sup>.

• THIS was remarkably the Case of the  
• *Jailor*, who in the very Night in which he  
• was

• <sup>1</sup> Isai. l. 10.      <sup>m</sup> Isai. Ixi. 3.      <sup>n</sup> 1 Pet. i. 8.  
• Luke i. 46, 47.

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was converted, that same Night, in which the Foundation of his House had been shaken, and his own Soul too shaken, by an Earthquake, so that he had endeavoured to stay violent Hands on himself; yet, I say, that very Night, before the Day appeared, having been directed to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, that he might be saved, and been enabled by Divine Grace to comply with the Exhortation, it is added concerning him, that he rejoiced, believing in GOD with all his Heart.—Thus too the Thessalonians, tho' they received the Word in much Affliction, and ran the Risque of losing their Possessions and their Lives in adhering to it, yet received it with Joy of the Holy Ghost. And tho' I cannot say, this is God's most ordinary Way of dealing; and tho' I fear, the counterfeit Appearance of such a Work as this, often leaves Men in the Number of those, whom our Lord represents by Stony Ground Hearers; yet 'tis certain, some Instances of this Kind are still to be found. But then I must observe, this is a Joy attended with the deepest Humility, and animates the Soul to the most ardent and affectionate Resolution of walking worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being strengthened with all Might according to his glorious Power, unto

<sup>p</sup> Acts xvi. 34.    <sup>q</sup> 1 Theſſ. i. 6.    <sup>r</sup> Matt. xiii.  
20, 21.

4. OTHERS, and these perhaps the greatest Part of such as are religiously educated, are "led on by such gentle and insensible Degrees, that they can hardly recollect any remarkable Circumstances that have attended their Conversion, nor can certainly fix on the particular Time of it."

GOD is sometimes, as in the preceding instances, in the Whirlwind, the Earthquake, and the Fire; but he is also frequently in the still small Voice<sup>t</sup>. The Operations of the Holy Spirit on the Soul are often, and perhaps generally, of such a Nature, that 'tis difficult exactly to distinguish them from the rational Exercise of our own Thoughts; because the Spirit operates by suggesting rational Views of Things, and awakening rational Affections. For, whatever some have vainly and dangerously insinuated, nothing is so rational as the Sentiments and Temper which prevail in Renewed Souls, and to which it is the Work of God's regenerating Spirit to bring them.

• THESE Operations, where there is a Re-

<sup>t</sup> Col. i. 10, 11. 1 Kings xix. 11, 12.

274 Some may not know the Time . SER. 2.  
ligious Education, often begin very early ;  
but then, in some Degree, the Impressions  
wear off from the weak and flexible Mind -  
and perhaps there are various Instances, in  
which they alternately revive, and decay  
again. And this *Vicissitude* of affectionate  
*Applications to Religion*, (under moving *Or-*  
*dinances, Afflictions, or Deliverances,*) &c.  
of *Backslidings* and *Remissness* in it, may be  
permitted, with respect to many, to con-  
tinue for a long Time. At length, under  
the various Methods of *Providence* and  
*Grace*, the Soul arrives to greater *Steadiness*,  
and a more habitual *Victory* over the  
mainders of *Indwelling Sin* : But it may be  
exceeding hard, and perhaps absolutely im-  
possible, to determine, concerning some re-  
markable Scenes through which it has passed,  
whether such a one in particular, perhaps the  
last which strikes the Memory, were the  
Season of its *New Birth*, or whether it were  
merely a *Recovery* from such a Degree of  
*Negligence* and *Remissness*, as may possibly  
be consistent with real *Religion*, and be found  
in a *Regenerate Soul*.

THESE *Ballancings* of *Backsliding* and  
*Recovery* often occasion very great *Perplexity* ;  
and such Sort of *Converts* are frequently  
much discouraged, because they cannot give  
the History of their *Religious Experiences*,  
in so clear and distinct a Manner; as others;  
and

and particularly, because they have not passed through such violent Terrors and Agitations of Mind, as many, who were perhaps once sunk into much deeper Degeneracy, have done. Nevertheless, where there is a Consciousness of an undissembled Love to G O D, an unreserved Devotedness to his Service, a Sordid Trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, and a sincere Affection to Mankind in general, and especially those of the Household of Faith, a man ought not to perplex himself on this Account. For as every Man knows, he was born into the World, by a Consciousness that he now lives and acts here, tho' 'tis impossible he should remember any Thing of the Time or Circumstances, in which he was first produced into it; So may a Christian be assured, that some Way or another he was born of the Spirit, if he can trace its genuine Fruits and efficacious Influences in a renewed Heart and Life.

I HAVE thus laid down several Particulars, which appeared to me important, in order to illustrate that Diversity, which is observable in the Methods of the Divine Operation on the Heart: And they will naturally lead us to these Three Reflections, with which I shall conclude my present Discourse.—Let us not make our own Experiences a Standard for others; — nor the Ex-

276 Our own Experiences should not Serve  
periences of others a Standard for ourselves ;—  
nor let us be unwilling, in a prudent Manner,  
to communicate our Spiritual Experiences  
to each other.

(1.) LET us not make our own Experi-  
ences a Standard for others.

LET us remember, that there is, as we have heard, a Diversity of Opinions; and that many a Person may be dear to GOD, who was not born just with those Circumstances which attended our own Generation. Others may not so particularly have discerned the Time, the Occasion, the Progress of the Change : They may not have felt all that we felt, either in a Way of extraordinary Terror, or extraordinary Comfort ; and yet perhaps may equal, or even exceed us in that holy Temper, to which it was the great Intention of our Heavenly Father, by one Method or another, to bring all his Children. Nay, I will add, that Christians of a very amiable and honourable Character may express themselves but in a dark, and something of an improper Manner, concerning the Doctrine of Regeneration, and may, in Conscience, scruple the Use of some Phrases relating to it, which we judge to be exceeding suitable ; and yet, that very Scruple which displeases us, may proceed from a Reverence for

PER. 8. be made a Standard for others. 277  
of GOD and Truth, and from such a Tenderness of Heart as is the Effect of his Renewing Grace. We should therefore be very cautious, how we judge each other, and take upon us to reject those whom perhaps GOD has received.

I REMEMBER, good Dr. Owen, whose endour was, in many respects, very remarkable, carries this so far, as some where say, that some may perhaps have experienced "the saving Influences of the Holy Spirit on their Hearts, who do not in Words acknowledge the Necessity, or even the Reality of those Influences." Judging Men's Hearts, and judging their States, is a Work for which we are so ill qualified, that we have Reason to be exceedingly thankful, it is not assigned to us. And when we are entering into such an Examination of their Character, as our Duty may in some particular Circumstances seem to require, we should be very solicitous, that we do not lay down arbitrary and precarious Rules. It seems indeed, that so far as we can learn it, we may more safely judge by their present Temper and Conduct, than by the History of any Thing which has formerly passed in their Minds.

AND let me add it, as a necessary Caution here, that they, who never felt any of the extraordinary Emotions of Mind, which have

been described under some former Heads, but have been brought to Religion by less observable Methods, perhaps by calmer *ratio-*  
*nal Views of it*, (of whom I believe there are great Numbers,) should be very *cautious*, that they do not rashly *censure such Things* as I have now been representing, as if they were mere *Enthusiasm*. I cannot but think this a Criminal Limiting the Holy, of Israel, and fear it will be found highly displeasing to him, and to ~~the~~ and to the Souls of those who allow themselves in it, and of others too, if they be such as are employed in the *Ministerial Work*: Now to insist on, what in Comparison of this is but a small Matter, the apparent Rudeness and Petulance of contradicting Facts, so well attested as many of this Kind have been, and running counter to the solid Effects which such Impressions have produced. The Rashness which prevails under different Forms, among Men of the most opposite Sentiments, is too obvious; but if we would give ourselves Leave calmly to weigh ~~and~~ of a Matters, our Spirits would be ~~charater~~ all Sides more moderate, and many hasty Censures would be suspended, which at present prove very little more, than the Ignorance, Pride, and Folly of those that pass them.

(2.) LET

(2.) ~~LET us not make the Experiences  
of others a Standard for ourselves.~~

This is frequently the Case, and especially with those, who are naturally of an humble and tender Temper; for whose Peace and Comfort therefore, one cannot but be peculiarly solicitous. Having heard of some extraordinary Experiences of others, they are ready to imagine, because they can trace something correspondent to these in their own Minds, that they are utter Strangers to general generation, and have nothing more than such Religious Notions and Forms, as Natural Men may easily learn of each other.

BUT what I have now been saying, of the Variety of the Divine Operations on the Heart, affords a solid Answer to such Scruples, when they arise in a pious Mind. Reflect, on this Occasion, how it is in the Works of Nature: There we know, that GOD works in all, so that He is the Life and leed of the whole Creation; and yet, nay more, a silent Writer expresses it, "He seems not to work:" His Agency is so invisible, and secret, that did not Reason and Scripture join to teach it, one might live a great many Years in the World, without knowing any Thing more, than that such and such Effects are produced by

280      *The Cause is oftentimes*      SER. 8.  
correspondent *Second Causes*; tho' in strict Propriety of Speech, they are *no Causes at all*, but owe all their *Efficacy* to the *Hiving Presence*, and *Operation*. Sense tells us, that the *Sun* enlightens the Earth, and warms it; that the *Rain* waters it, the *Seeds* produce *Vegetables*, and the *Animals* continue their proper Race: But that *GOD is the Father of Lights*,<sup>1</sup> that he *has prepared the Light and the sun*<sup>2</sup>; that he *visits the Earth, and causes rain to descend into the Furrows thereof*<sup>3</sup>, ~~in order~~ to make the *Grass* to grow for *Cattle*, and *Corn* and *Herb* for the Service of *Man*<sup>4</sup>; that he *sends forth his Spirit*, and the *Animal Race* is *created*, and the *Face of the Earth* *renewed*<sup>5</sup>; this, I say, is what Multitudes of the *Human Race* are not aware of; because in ~~all~~ these Things he *acts* in a gentle, stated, and regular Manner, and employs *Inferior Agents* as the *Instruments of his Providence*. And just thus gentle, silent, and regular are the *Influences of his Spirit*, upon Mens Souls; and it is often impossible, <sup>of</sup> exactly to *distinguish them from the character* <sup>and</sup> *of Parents and Ministers, and* <sup>the</sup> *Reflections which seem to spring from* <sup>our</sup> *own Minds*; tho' it is *he, that gives us Counsel*, while our *Reins instruct us in our secret Musings*.

\* Jam. i. 17.      x Psal. lxxiv. 16.      y Psal. lxv.  
9, 10,      z Psal. civ. 14.      a Psal. civ. 30.

Musings<sup>b</sup>, and that teaches us to profit by the Lessons which others give us.

Be not therefore surprized, and be not  
dejected, tho' you cannot assign the Place,  
the Time, the Manner, in which your Con-  
version began; and tho' you are Strangers to  
the Terrors, the Sorrows, or the Transports  
of Joy, which you have heard one and another  
experiments. *The Wind bloweth where it listeth,*  
~~and the Spirit dispenses his Influences where,~~  
~~to whom he listeth, and in what Measure and Degree~~  
he pleases. But while the Way and Manner  
of his Operation may be secret and un-  
known, the Effects of it are sensible and  
evident; and as with regard to the Wind,  
thou hearest the Sound thereof, but canst not  
tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth;  
so is every one that is born of the Spirit<sup>c</sup>.  
You may not certainly know when to fix the  
precise Time of your Conversion, or how to  
trace the particular Steps by which it has  
been brought to pass; for as thou knowest  
~~not what is the Way of the Spirit, nor how~~  
~~the changes do grow in the Womb of her that is~~  
~~more fair; even so thou knowest not the Works~~  
~~of God who maketh all<sup>d</sup>.~~ But tho' you can-  
not trace the Process of the Operation, the  
Effects of it are such as you may feel within  
you, and by its Fruits it will be known<sup>e</sup>. It  
is

<sup>b</sup> Psal. xvi. 7.

<sup>c</sup> Matt. vii. 20.

<sup>c</sup> John iii. 8.

<sup>d</sup> Eccl. xi. 5,

is indeed desirable, to be able to give an Account of the Beginning and the Progress of the Work of GOD upon your souls, as some that are Regenerate can do; but this is not necessary, to evidence the Truth of Grace. Happy is he, who in this Case can say, as the Blind Man in the Gospel, *One Thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see*. For as you know, that there is Fire, when you see the Flame, tho' you know not where, or when it began: So also it may be inferred, that you have really undergone a Saving Change; tho' you know not where, or when it was wrought in your hearts. If you answer the Characters laid down in the preceding Discourses, as essential to the truly Regenerate, (which are all comprehended in Repentance and Faith, producing an unfeigned Love and uniform Obedience,) you may trace the Cause from the Effect, with far greater Certainty than you could have traced such an Effect, as what would infallibly follow from any Cause, which you could have perceived in your Mind previous to it. There may indeed be great Awakenings, violent Terrors, transient or tick Joys, where there is no Saving Right GOD on the Soul: But where the Divine Image is produced, and the Soul is actually renewed, we are sure, (as was before observed,) that Grace has been working, tho' we

we know not *when*, or *where*, or *how*.— And therefore on the whole, guarding against both these Extreams, and to cure them both,

(3.) LET Christians, in a prudent and humble Manner, be ready to communicate their Religious Experiences to each other.

~~to~~ undoubtedly intended, that the Variety of Operations should be observed and owned, in the World of Grace, as well as in that of Nature; And as these Things pass in the Secret recesses of Mens Hearts, how should they be known, unless they will themselves communicate and declare them? And let me caution you against that strange Averseness to all Freedoms of this Kind, which, especially in Persons of a reserved Temper, is so ready to prevail. Let not any think it beneath them to do it. You well know, that David, who was not only ~~Ex~~ ~~Man~~ of an admirable Genius, but a mighty ~~s~~ an exc~~el~~lent, was far from thinking it so: ~~the~~ ~~contrary~~, deeply impressed with the Divine Condescension in all the gracious Visits he had received from him, he calls, as it were, the whole pious World around him, that they might be edified, and comforted by the Relation: Come, says he, and bear

284 *The Benefit that would arise* SER. 8.  
bear, all ye that fear G O D, and I will declare what he has done for my Soul<sup>s</sup>. He proclaimed it, not with his Voice and Harp alone, but with his immortal Pen: And many other noble and excellent Persons concurr'd with him; and the invaluable Treasure of their Experiences, in as great a Variety of Circumstances as we can well imagine, is transmitted to us in the ~~verses~~<sup>verses</sup> of Psalms. Can any just Reason there be assigned, why they, who live under ~~is~~<sup>the</sup> job Dispensation, and a more abundant Communication of the Spirit, should be entirely silent on this Subject?

THERE may indeed be an Over-Forwardness, which is one apparent Effect of Pride and Self-conceit, and which, with thinking People, may bring even the Sincerity of the Speaker into Question, or put his Indiscretion beyond all Possibility of being questioned. But it would be very unreasonable to argue, that because a Thing may be *done ill*, it cannot possibly be *done well*.

WHY may not intimate Friends <sup>under an</sup> ~~and~~ <sup>in</sup> their Hearts to each other on such dearful Topicks? Why may not they, who have met with any Thing peculiar of this Kind, communicate it to their Minister? And, tho' I must in Conscience declare against

against making it absolutely and universally ~~Term of Communion~~; yet, I am well assured, that in some Instances, a prudent and serious *Communication* of these Things to a *Christian Society*, when a Person is to be admitted into Fellowship with it, has often answered very valuable Ends. By this Means ~~GOD~~ has the Honour of his own Work; and others have the Pleasure of sympathizing with the Relator, both in his Sorrows, and they derive from hence some additional Satisfaction as to his Fitness for an Approach to the *Lord's Table*; they learn with Pleasure the *Divine Blessing* which attends the *Administration of Ordinances* among them; and make Observations and Remarks, which may assist them in offering their Addresses to GOD, and in giving proper Advices to others who are in Circumstances like those related. To all which we may add, that the *Ministers of Christ* do, in particular, learn what may be a Means of forming them to a more *Experimental Manner of Preaching*, as well as in many Instances discoyer those, before unknown, *Toches of Success*, which may strengthen their Hands in the Work of their great Master.

IT is by frequent *Conversations of this Kind*, that I have learnt many of the Particulars, on which I have grounded the preceding Discourse. I hope therefore, you will

286 *How useful it may be to Ministers.* Sect. 3.  
will excuse me, if on so natural an Occasion I have borne my publick Testimony, to what has been so edifying to me, both as a Minister, and a Christian. And the tender Regard which I have for Young Persons training up for the Work of the Ministry, and my ardent Desire that they may learn the Language of Sion, and have "those peculiar Advantages, which nothing but acquaintance with Cases, and an attention on Facts can give," has been the Inducement to me to add this Reflection, with which I conclude my Discourse, humbly hoping, that what you have heard upon this Occasion, will, by the Divine Blessing, furnish out agreeable Matter for such Conversation as I have now recommended, to the Glory of GOD, and to the Advancement of Religion among you. Amen.



S E R-

## S E R M O N I X.

DIRECTIONS to awaken'd Sinners.

ACTS ix. 6.

*And he, trembling and astonished,  
said, Lord, what wilt thou have  
me to do? —*

THESE are the Words of Saul, (*who also is called Paul<sup>a</sup>,*) when he was stricken to the Ground, as he was going to Damascus: And any one who had looked upon him in his present Circumstances, and known nothing more of him, than *that View*, in Comparison with his past Life, could have given, would have imagined him one of the most miserable Creatures that ever lived upon Earth, and would have expected, that he should very soon have been numbered among the most miserable of those in Hell.

He

Acts xiii. 9.

He was engaged in a Course of such savage *Cruelty*, as can, upon no Principle of common *Morality*, be vindicated, even tho' the *Christians* had been as much mistaken, as he rashly and foolishly concluded they were. After having *dragged many of them into Prison*, and given his *Voice against some that were put to Death*, he persecuted others *into strange Cities*; and had now obtained a ~~com-~~<sup>mission</sup> from the Sanhedrim at Jerusalem<sup>a</sup> to carry this holy, or rather this impious War into *Damascus*<sup>b</sup>, and to bring ~~the~~ *Prophets* to the Religion of the blessed *Jesus*, bound from thence to *Jerusalem*<sup>c</sup>; probably that they might there be animadverted upon with greater Severity, than coulu safely have been attempted by the *Jews* in so constant a City, under a Foreign Governour.

BUT, behold, as he was in the Way, *Jesus* interposes, clothed with a *Lustre* exceeding that of the *Sun at Noon*<sup>d</sup>. He strikes him down from the Beast on which he rode, and lays him prostrate on the *Ground*, calling to him with a *Voice* far more dreadful than that of *Thunder*, *Saul, Saul, why persecuteſt thou me?*

ANY one would have imagined, from the Circumstances in which he now beheld *Saul*, that *Divine Vengeance* had already begun to seize.

<sup>b</sup> Acts xxvi. 10,—12.

<sup>c</sup> Acts ix. 2.

<sup>d</sup> Acts

xxvi. 13. <sup>c</sup> Acts ix. 4.

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seize him, and that full Execution would quickly have been done. But GOD's Ways are not as our Ways, nor are his Thoughts as our Thoughts<sup>f</sup>. Christ laid him almost as low as Hell, that he might rait him as high as the Third Heaven; of which he afterwards gave him a View in Vision, to anticipate his Reception into it<sup>g</sup>. This Day of his Terror and Astonishment was, in a nobler Sense than any other, the Day of his Birth; for he brought to bow himself at the Foot of an injuredaviour, to offer him as it were a Blank, upon which to write his own Terms of Peace; and as soon as he heard, that this glorious Person was Jesus, whom in his Members he had so long persecuted, he makes his Submission in these truly comprehensive Words, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?—This was not a Time for a long Speech; but he that discerns all the secret Recesses of the Spirit, knew these few Words were full of a most important Meaning, and express'd not only a Grief of Heart for all that he had before been doing against Christ and his Kingdom, but the sincerest Resolution for the Future to employ himself in his Service, waiting only the Intimations of his wise and gracious Will, as to the most proper and acceptable Manner of beginning the Attempt.

Isai. iv. 8. & 2 Cor. xii. 2.

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THERE

THERE is, methinks, a poignant Kind of Eloquence in this short Expression, far beyond what any Paraphrase upon it can give : And our compassionate Lord accepted this Surrender. All his former *Rebellions* were no more remember'd against him ; and before he rose from the *Ground* to which he fell on so terrible an Occasion, *Christ* gave him an Intimation, not only that his forfeited Life should be spared, so that he should get safe into the *City* to which he was bound ; but that he should there be instructed in that *Service*, which *Jesus*, whom be had persecuted, woul<sup>d</sup> now condescend to receive at his Hands.

I REPRESEN<sup>T</sup>T the Case thus largely, because I hope it is a Case, which in some Measure suits the Experience of some that hear me this Evening. Paul tells us, it was for this Reason, among others, that he himself obtained Mercy, tho' he was the Chief of Sinners, that in him, as the Chief, Jesus Christ might shew forth all Long-suffering, for a Pattern to them who should afterwards believe<sup>h</sup>.

Is there then, in this Assembly, any awaken'd and convinced Sinner ? any one, that, appriz'd of his Folly, and sensible of his Misery, is desirous to fall at the Foot of

SER. 9. suit the Experience of others. 291  
of Christ, and say with Saul, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? That which I see not, teach thou me; and wherein I have done Iniquity, I will do so no more<sup>1</sup>! — To such would I now especially address: And while I put the Question, Is there any such among us? I would fain persuade myself, there are several: For I humbly hope, that all the Labours that have been bestowed in the preceding Discourses are not in vain, nor all the Prayers that have been offer'd for their Success in vain, Prayers, which I doubt not have been carried by many of you into your Families and your Closets, as well as jointly presented to God in this publick Assembly. Trusting therefore that it is thus with some, and praying that it may be a more frequent Case, I proceed,

SIXTHLY, To give some Directions to such, who are awaken'd by Divine Grace to a Sense of their Misery in an Unregenerate State, and are brought to desire Recovery from it.

To such I propose to give Directions: And to what Purpose would it be, to undertake to offer them to any others? Who would pretend to teach those, who are unconcerned about their Salvation, what Methods they

are to take, in order to their becoming truly *Regenerate*? This methinks would be like giving *Directions*, how those might learn to *write*, who do not desire it, and will not take a Pen into their Hands. All I could say to such, while they continue in this Character, would vanish into empty Air : It would not, probably, be so much as observed and remember'd. I speak therefore to *awaken'd Souls*; and to such it is pleasant to address on this Head. *Ananias* undoubtedly undertook this Message to *Saul* with *Chearfulness*, to tell him what *Christ* w<sup>ould</sup> have him to do: And I would, wit' r' Pleasure and *Chearfulness* engage in the like Work; humbly hoping, that *we will bear with Observation and Attention, will bear for themselves, and sorrow for their Good*<sup>k</sup>. And to this Purpose, let me advise you,—to attend to the *Impressions* that have been made upon you, with great *Seriousness*,—to *break off* every Thing that is *contrary* to them,—to *seek* for further *Knowledge* in *Religious Matters*,—to *pour out your Soul before God* in earnest *Prayer*, — to *communicate* the State of *your Case* to some experienced *Christian*,—to *acquaint yourselves with such, as are much in your own Circumstances*,— to *fly immediately to Christ*, as ready to receive all that come to him,—to *dedicate yourselves to*

<sup>k</sup> Job v. 27.

to him, and to his Service, in the most solemn Manner,—to arm yourselves to encounter with the greatest Difficulties in your Christian Course,—and finally, to take every Step in this Attempt, with a deep Sense of your own Weakness, and a humble Dependence upon Divine Grace to be communicated to you as the Matter requires.—These are the several Directions I would offer to you: And may they be impress'd in such a Manner on your Souls, that none of you may lose the Things that have been wrought<sup>1</sup>; but by the effectual working of the mighty Power of GOD<sup>m</sup>, such as he graciously has been pleased to bring in the Birth, may be brought forth<sup>n</sup>, and such as are awaken'd may be savingly renew'd!

i. I WOULD advise you to “attend to  
“ the Impressions made upon you, with  
“ great Seriousness.”

THEY may perhaps take you a little off the World, and its Concernments; and some will blame you for suffering such an Interruption: But regard not that Censure. The Time will come, if you pursue these Things aright, when renewed Diligence, Prudence, and the Divine Blessing will amply make amends for any present Hindrance, which

U 3                      these

<sup>1</sup> 2 John, ver. 8. <sup>m</sup> Ephes. i. 19. <sup>n</sup> Isai. lxvi. 9.

294 *Attend to the Impressions you feel,* SEZ: 9.  
these Impressions may occasion. And if it  
should be otherwise, were there not a Cause?  
If a Man seized with a threatening Distem-  
per, should chuse, for a little while, to lay aside  
his usual Business, that he might attend to  
the Care of his Health, before the Symptoms  
grew incurable, would any Body blame him  
for this? On the contrary, would it not be  
looked upon as acting a very wise, prudent,  
and necessary Part? Much more may it be  
said here, *It is not a light Thing for you;*  
*because it is your Life*<sup>o</sup>: And if the Life is  
more than Meat, and the Body than Raiment<sup>p</sup>,  
then surely the Soul is here to be regarded  
than either. And therefore what you do  
in your Worl<sup>y</sup> Affairs, do moderately;  
and do not grudge that Retirement, which  
is so necessary in such a tender Circumstance  
as this.—I may apply to you, on this Occa-  
sion, those Words of Solomon; *Through De-*  
*fire a Man having separated himself, seeketh*  
*and intermeddleth with all Wisdom*<sup>q</sup>. If you  
desire to attain *Divine Wisdom*, you must  
separate yourself from all other Things to  
pursue it.—And it is the more necessary to  
attend to this now, because the Tempter may  
probably contrive to lay some more than  
ordinary Avocation in your Way, at a Time  
when the Interest of his Kingdom requires  
you.

<sup>o</sup> Deut. xxxii. 47.      <sup>p</sup> Matth. vi. 25.      <sup>q</sup> Prov.  
xviii. 1.

SER, 9. *and break off from every Sin.* .295

you should be diverted from prosecuting those Views, which are presenting themselves to you, and by which you may so probably be rescued out of his Hands, and put for ever out of his Power.

2. LET me advise you, to "*break off*" "*every Thing, which is contrary to*" "*such Impressions as these.*"

*SIN* will immediately appear to have been your Disease, and your Ruin ; and therefore, if ever you hope for Recovery, you must resolutely *break with that* ; not merely with *this or that particular Evil*, but with *every Sin* ; and that not only for a little while, but *entirely and for ever*. A mortal irreconcileable War must be declared against it. Every *fleſhy Lust* must be *denied* ; every *immoral Practice*, for which your Heart may at any Time smite you, must be *reformed* ; and if ever you expect to *reap Mercy and Life*, you must, as the *Prophet* expresses it, *break up your fallow Ground* ; and *not sow among Thorns* : For *Righteousness has no Fellowship with Unrighteousness, and Light no Communion with Darkness* : And you may be assured, that as *all Sin grieves the Spirit of G O D*, and strengthens the heavy *Fetters* which lie upon the Soul ; so *those Sins which are com-*

U 4

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: Hos. x. 12.

: Jer. iv. 3.

: 2 Cor. vi. 14.

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mitted after these *Awakenings* and *Convictions*, have a peculiar Guilt attending them, and do greater *Despite to the Spirit of Grace*<sup>1</sup>, in Proportion to the Degree in which his Motions on the Soul have been vigorous and warm.

3. "SEEK further Knowledge," especially from *the Word* and *Ordinances of God*.

THE *Influences of Divine Grace* are not to be considered as a *blind Impulse*; but *GOD's Spirit* works *of the Spirit of Man*, as one Rational Being on another. The *Apostle* therefore, puts the Question, with great Reason, *How shall they believe in him, of whom they have not heard*<sup>w</sup>? And as *some Knowledge* is the Foundation, on which the *Spirit of GOD* ordinarily operates in Mens Hearts; so in Proportion to the Degree in which you attain *further Light*, into the Scheme of the *Gospel*, and of *Salvation by Christ*, it may be expected you will be more impressed by it. The Mention of this is so much the more necessary, as *mistaken Notions of Religion* often expose People, on the one Hand, to great *Perplexities*; and on the other, betray them into a *false Peace*, which one way or another will be *Bitterness in the end*.

<sup>a</sup> Heb. x. 29.      <sup>v</sup> Rom. x. 14.

~~The End.~~—Come therefore to the *House of GOD*, and attend *Spiritual Preaching*. The Question is not about *Forms*, but *Things*. Be not therefore over-scrupulous about what is merely *circumstantial* in Religion, on the one Hand, or the other : But where you find most *Spiritual Light* and Improvement, there chuse generally to attend ; not confining Religion to any particular *Party*, nor judging those who differ from you in their Sentiment or Practice ; but calmly and humbly seeking your own *Edification*, leaving others to seek theirs, where they are persuaded in the Sight of God they may most probably find it.—Above all, remember in this Circumstance to make the *Word of GOD the Man of your Counsel* \*, and to judge of what you read and hear by the Tenor of *that*, as the Oracle of Eternal Truth ; always attending the Reading of it with earnest *Prayer* to GOD, for the Illumination of his *Spirit* ; as I shall afterward more particularly direct.—No other *Books* are to be set up in Opposition to *this*, or in Comparison with it ; yet let it be your Care, in Subordination to *Scripture*, to study the *Writings* of those *faithful Servants of GOD* in latter Ages, who themselves manifest a Sense of *Practical Religion*. Especially endeavour to find out and peruse those *Writings*, which treat of *Conversion* and *Regeneration*,

\* Psal. cxix. 24,

*generation*, and which contain Advice suited to your Case. Blessed be GOD, our Language abounds with such; and every truly Christian Minister will be glad to direct you to them, and so far as he has a convenient Opportunity, to furnish you with them.

4. “ *POUR out your Soul before GOD*  
 “ *in earnest Prayer:*”

You cannot be unacquainted with the many *Promises* GOD has made in *Scripture*, for the Encouragement of those who *desire to pray to him* in the Sincerity of their Hearts. You know, into how little a Compass Christ has crowded together *Three equivalent Promises*; *Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you*: And you cannot but remember the *three-fold Encouragement*, from the Success of those who have Recourse to the Expedient, which he has added in the most express and general Terms: *For every one that asketh, receiveth; and he that seeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened*<sup>2</sup>. Go therefore in a cheerful Dependance upon this *Promise*: Go, and try the Truth of it.—Whither should a Creature in such Circumstances go, but to *that GOD* who has the *Hearts of all in his Hand, as the Rivers of Water, and turns*

<sup>1</sup> Matth. vii. 7.      <sup>2</sup> Ver. 8.

turns them whithersoever he will<sup>a</sup>? And who should go to him, rather than you? — And in what Circumstances should a distressed Creature rather think of looking and crying to him, than in these; where it sees itself surrounded with so much Danger, and yet feels an inward earnest Desire, not only of Deliverance, but of Holiness too? — Go therefore, and cast yourself at the Feet of GOD this very Evening; do it, as soon as you return to your Habitations; and if you cannot put your Thoughts and Desires into Words, at least sigh and groan before the Lord. Mourn, if you cannot pray; and mourn, that you cannot; or rather be assured, that unutterable Groaning have sometimes the greatest Efficacy, and prove the most prevailing Eloquence.

IT will be no Wonder at all, if in these Circumstances Satan should endeavour to terrify you. It is his common Practice. So many Souls have vanquished him upon their Knees, that he dreads and hates the Posture: But draw an Argument from that very Opposition, to make you so much the more eager and importunate; and when your Heart is over-whelmed within you, fly unto the Rock that is higher than you<sup>b</sup>.

I WILL add, Be not discouraged, tho' Help be not immediately imparted. Tho' you

<sup>a</sup> Prov. xxi. 1.

<sup>b</sup> Psal. lxi. 2.

S. p. 9.

*Communicate your Case*

you may seem to be *cast out of God's Side*, yet *look again towards his holy Temple*.<sup>1</sup> Tho' you seem to *cry from the Deep*s, and almost from the *Belly of Hell*<sup>2</sup>, the *Bowels* of a *Heavenly Father* will *yearn over you*, as returning *Prodigals*; and I doubt not, you will meet with the Reception, that *Ephraim* found, when *GOD* saw him *bemoaning* and *humbling himself*, because he had been *as a Bullock unaccustomed to the Yoke*: When he cried, *Turn thou me, and I shall be turned, for thou art the Lord my GOD*; his *Heavenly Father* answers him in these most affectionate Words; (attend to them, O thou returning Sinner, for thy Comfort in this Hour of Distress!) *Is Ephraim my dear Son?* *is he not a pleasant Child?* for since I spoke against him, I do earnestly remember him still; therefore my Bowels are troubled for him, and I will surely have Mercy upon him, saith the Lord.<sup>3</sup>

5. I WOULD advise you farther, that you  
 " immediately communicate the State  
 " of your Case to some experienced  
 " Christian."

I KNOW, there is a *Backwardness*, in Persons of your Circumstances, to do it; and it has been surprizing to me, to learn from the Converse of some, who in this Respect

<sup>1</sup> Jonah ii. 4.    <sup>2</sup> Ver. 2.    <sup>3</sup> Jer. xxxi. 18, 20.

~~See~~ to some experienced Christian. 301

Respect have afterwards grown wiser, how long they have been pining away in their Sorrow before they could be persuaded to consult their Ministers, or Christian Friends. It is a Stratagem of Satan, against which I would by all Means caution you. And one would think, your own Reason should suggest some very obvious *Advantages*, attending the Method I propose, of opening your Case freely to those, whom you think to be more experienced in these Things. The *Impression* may be revived upon your own Souls, even by the Account you give them : And their *Advice* may be exceeding useful to you, to guard you against the *Wiles* of the *Enemy*, which they have known, tho' hitherto you are Strangers to them ; and to guide you into such Methods, as by the Divine Blessing may farther promote that *good Work*, which seems in any Measure to have been begun within you. You may also depend upon it, that it will engage their *Prayers* for you ; which in this Case may have great Prevalency. And it will also naturally lead them to inspect your *Conduct* ; and if they see you afterwards in Danger of being drawn aside, they may remind you of the *Hopes* once entertained, and the *Impressions* once made upon your Mind.— In this Respect you may hope, that by walking with

*Associate yourselves* Scrib'd.  
 with wise Men you will be yet wiser<sup>1</sup>; and  
 will soon find how happy an Exchange you  
 make, when you give up your ~~un~~<sup>old</sup> and  
 perhaps wicked Companions, that you may be-  
 come the Companion of them that fear GOD,  
 and that keep his Precepts<sup>2</sup>; and may have  
 your Delight in them, who in the Judgment  
 of GOD are the Excellent of the Earth<sup>3</sup>,  
 however they may be despised and derided  
 by Men.

6. I WOULD also advise, that you “en-  
 “ deavour to search out those, if there  
 “ be any such about or, near you, who  
 “ are much in your own Circum-  
 “ stances.” “ except”

OBSERVE, especially among *Young People*,  
 whether there are any that seem of late to  
 be grown more serious than ordinary; and  
 particularly, more constant in attending the  
 Ordinances of GOD, and more cautious in  
 venturing on Occasions and Temptations to  
 Sin: And if you can discover such, endeavour  
 to form *an Acquaintance* with them. Try  
 by proper Hints, how far *their Circumstances*  
 resemble *yours*; and as you find Encourage-  
 ment, enter into a stricter *Friendship* with  
 them, founded on *Religion*, and intended to  
 promote it in each others Hearts. *Associate*  
*your*

<sup>1</sup> Prov. xiii. 20. <sup>2</sup> Psal. cxix. 63. <sup>3</sup> Psal. xvi. 3.

~~gather~~ yourselves in little Bands for Christian Conference and Prayer : And by this Means you will ~~gather~~, and strengthen the Hearts of each other. For on the one Hand, what they tell you of their own Experience, will much confirm you in a Persuasion, that what you find in yourselves is not a mere Fancy, but is really a Divine Work begun on your Hearts, and will give you Encouragement to pursue it as such ; for as Face answers to Face in Water, so does the Heart of Man to Man<sup>i</sup> : And on the other Hand, the Observation of your pious Zeal will quicken others, and may occasion the Revival of Religion in the Hearts of elder Christians ; as, I bless GOD, I have ~~found~~ some Things of this Kind have done, and hope, (and through the Divine Blessing expect,) to find it more and more. Therefore exhort one another daily, while it is called To Day, lest any of you should be hardened through the Deceitfulness of Sin<sup>k</sup>. Strengthen ye the weak Hands, and confirm the feeble Knees<sup>l</sup> : And be assured, that while you are endeavouring to help others, you will find in yourselves the First-fruits of this happy Attempt ; and while you water others, you will be watered also yourselves<sup>m</sup>.

7. IT is an Advice of the highest Importance,

<sup>i</sup> Prov. xxvii. 19. <sup>k</sup> Heb. iii. 13. <sup>l</sup> Isai. xxxv. 3.

<sup>m</sup> Prov. xi. 25.

portance, that “*whoever you are,*”  
 “*would immediately fly to Christ,*  
 “*and repose the Confidence of your*  
 “*Souls upon him.*”

OBSERVE, that I urge you, WHOEVER YOU ARE, to *fly immediately to Christ*: And this I do, to guard against a strange Notion, which some are ready to entertain as if we were to *bring something of our own Righteousness and Obedience to him*, to render us worthy of being accepted by him. But this is a grand Mistake. The *Blessings of the Gospel* are not to be considered, as Matter of Bargain and Sale: No, if we come to buy *Wine and Milk*, it must be ~~without~~ Money and without Price<sup>n</sup>; and whoever will take of the Water of Life, must do it freely<sup>o</sup>. If he pretend to offer an Equivalent, he forfeits his Share in the Invitation; and must be made to know, that the Price he offers, is a great Affront to the Value of the Blessings, for which he would thus barter.— Let this then be your Language, “Lord, I “ have undone myself, and in me is no Help: “ I see nothing in myself, which makes me “ worthy of thy Regard; but this I know, “ that where Sin has abounded, Grace does “ much more abound, and reigns through Righteousness unto Eternal Life by Jesus Christ “ through

SER. . And put your Trust in him. 305

" through whom, thou hast assured me in  
thy Word, that *Eternal Life is the Gift*  
of God. As such let me receive it;  
and how much the more *undeserving* I  
have been, by so much the more will I  
celebrate the *Riches of thy Grace*, in making  
me a *Vessel of Mercy*, and a Monument  
of Love throughout all Eternity.—Blessed  
Jesus, thou hast said, that *him who comes*  
*unto thee, thou wilt in no wise cast out*:  
Behold, I come, and cast myself at thy  
Feet; receive me, and put me among the  
Children<sup>1</sup>, tho' I deserve not the very  
Crumbs that fall from thy Table<sup>2</sup>.

You will not, I hope, imagine, that when  
I give such Advice as this, I mean to insinuate,  
that a Person *purposing to continue in his Sins* may nevertheless *come*, and *receive*  
the *Blessings of the Gospel*: For *that* would  
be no other, than in the grossest Manner to  
pervert, and contradict, the whole Tenor of  
it. But *this* I say, and repeat it, that when  
once a Sinner finds himself, by *Divine Grace*,  
disposed to *turn from his Sins to GOD*, and made willing to accept the *Mercy*  
tender'd in the *Gospel*, of which a *Deliverance from Sin*, and a *Renovation of Nature*,  
are a great, important, and essential Part;  
he may with *Chearfulness apply himself to*

<sup>1</sup> Rom. vi. 23.

<sup>2</sup> John vi. 37.

<sup>3</sup> Jer. iii. 19.

<sup>4</sup> Matt. xv. 27.

the great Redeemer, as one of those whom he came on purpose to deliver; and in Preparation to the Degree, in which he discerns the Sincerity of his Sentiments, he may open his Heart to Comfort, how great soever his former Unworthiness has been, and how late, soever such Impressions may have been made upon his Heart.

8. "MAKE the *Dedication of yourselves*  
 " to Christ, and his Service, as solemn  
 , " a Thing as you can."

WE read, in the *Acts*, of some that were baptized, and publickly received into the Church the very same Day in which they were converted<sup>u</sup>: And tho' a Change of Circumstances may at present render it convenient to defer doing it for some Time with the Solemnity of the *Ordinance* of the *Lord's Supper*, which is peculiarly intended for that Purpose; because it is proper, that the Efficacy of your *Repentance* and *Conversion* should first of all be so far seen, as in the Judgment of Charity to approve the Sincerity of it: Yet I think, when you feel your Hearts absolutely determined for GOD, you should in a solemn Manner lay hold of his *Covenant*, in secret at least, as soon as possible; and declare, as before

<sup>u</sup> *Acts* ii. 41, 47.

SER. 5. in a solemn Manner to Christ. 307

fore him that searcheth all Hearts, the Sincerity of that Acceptance.—Some have recommended the doing this in a written Engagement; and there are several very affecting Forms of this Kind in Books on this Subject, which may very profitably be used. But I hope, the Fulness of your Heart will dictate something of this Kind, if such Helps should be wanting, or if any peculiar Consideration should prevent their being used.—And surely, if you feel the Love of the Blessed Jesus glowing in your Hearts, as you ought, you will need no other Engagement to yield yourselves to him. That Love will be instead of Ten Thousand Arguments; and you will see a secret Charm in the View of serving him, which will engage your very Soul to spring forward with Vigour and Eigeueness to every proper Instance of it. The Dread of Future Punishment has certainly its Use, to restrain from the Commission of Sin, especially in an Hour of pressing Temptation; and the Hope of that exceeding and eternal Weight of Glory, which the Gospel promises, will have a greater Efficacy upon a generous Mind: Yet I will venture to say, that a Heart powerfully impress'd with the Love of Jesus will have a yet stronger Influence than either of these. Cordial Friendship needs not to be hired to perform its proper Office. Love is a Law to itself: It

308 *Recollect the Vows you have made,* VER. 9

adds a delightful Relish to every Attempt for the Service of its Object : And is frost, evidently thus in the present Case. "Lord," will the *Christian* say, "wilt thou do me the Honour to accept any feeble Attempt for thy Service, which I can form ? I thank thee for it ; and how my Heart before thee in the most grateful Acknowledgments, that thou favourest me with an Ability to discharge, in any Degree, the Fulness of my grateful Heart in presenting them : Oh that my whole Soul might daily rise before thee, as an acceptable Sacrifice, in the Flame of Love ! Oh that I might always feel my Heart enlarged, to run the Way of thy Commands : Were the Degree of my Future Happiness from this Moment invariably fixed, I would still pursue this delightful Business ; for there is no other, in which my Soul could find a Pleasure equal or comparable to it." If you feel such Thoughts as these rising in your Mind, breathe them out before the Throne from Day to Day : And when you have done it, recollect frequently the *Vows of GOD* that are upon you<sup>x</sup>; and see, that having sworn, you perform it<sup>y</sup>, and maintain in the whole of your Lives a Conduct agreeable to such a Profession as this.

9. " *GIRD*

<sup>w</sup> Psal. cxix. 32. <sup>x</sup> Psal. lvi. 12. <sup>y</sup> Psal. cxix. 106.

"GIRD up the Loins of your Mind,  
encounter with a great Deal of  
Difficulty in your Christian Course."

MANY are the *Difficulties* that you must expect; great and possibly for a while *increasing Difficulties*. It is commonly said indeed, that those *Difficulties* which attend the *Entrance* on a Religious Life, are the greatest; and in themselves considered, no Doubt but they are so: They arise from many Quarters, and unite all together in the same Design, of keeping you from a believing Application to *Christ*, and a resolute *Closure* with him. In this respect, *Evil* sometimes arises to a Man *in his own House*<sup>z</sup>; and those, whose *near Relation* should rather engage them to give the *Young Convert* the best Assistance, where his most important Interests are concerned, are on the Contrary ready to lay a Stumbling-Block in his Way; and perhaps act, as if they had rather he should have *no Religion* at all, than change a few Circumstances in the Outward Profession of it. *Worldly Interest* too is perhaps to be sacrificed; and *Conscience* cannot be preserved without giving up the *Friendship* of those, whom at any other Expence but *Conscience*, a Man would gladly oblige.

310      *Put on a steady Resolution,* SER. 9.  
And it is no Wonder, if *Satan* make his utmost Efforts, and these very unwarred <sup>too</sup>, that he may prevent the Revolt of his Subjects, or rather the Escape of his Prisoners. The *Christian* is therefore called upon by the *Apostle*, to *arm himself* as for a Combat, and that at all Points; to *put on the whole Armour of GOD*, that he may be able to *withstand in the Evil Day*; and having done all, *to stand*<sup>a</sup>.

NOR must you, my Friends, tho' as soon as you have *put on your Harness*, you gain some important Victory, *boast* as if you might securely *put it off*<sup>b</sup>. Your *whole Life* must be a Series of Exercise. Through much Opposition, as well as much Tribulation, ~~you must~~ enter into the Kingdom of GOD<sup>c</sup>: And tho' your Difficulties may generally be greatest at first, yet your Encouragements then may perhaps be so peculiarly great, and your Spirits under their first Religious Impressions so warm, that other Difficulties, in themselves smaller, may press more sensibly upon you. Endeavour therefore to keep yourselves in a prepared Posture: Put on a steady Resolution; and to support it, sit down and count th<sup>t</sup>: Cost, lest having begun to build you shamefully desist, and be not able to finish it<sup>d</sup>; or having put your Hand to the Plough, you

<sup>a</sup> Ephes. vi. 11, 13.    <sup>b</sup> I Kings xx. 11.    <sup>c</sup> Acts xiv. 22.    <sup>d</sup> Luke xiv. 28.—30.

SER. 5. and look to GOD for Strength. 311  
you should look back, and become unfit for  
the Kingdom of GOD<sup>c</sup>. And therefore,

10. LET every Step in this Attempt  
“ be taken, with a deep Sense of your  
“ own Weakness, and a humble De-  
“ pendence upon Divine Grace to be  
“ communicated to you as the Matter  
“ requires.”

RECOLLECT seriously what I was telling  
you in a former Discourse, of the Necessity  
of the Divine Agency and Interposition;  
and remember, it depends upon GOD, not  
only to begin the good Work, but also to carry  
it on, and perform it until the Day of Jesus  
Christ<sup>f</sup>. If we trust in our own Hearts,  
especially after this Solemn Admonition, this  
plain Instruction, added to such frequent  
Experience, we are Fools indeed<sup>g</sup>. Let us  
therefore trust in the Lord, and not lean to  
our own Understanding<sup>h</sup>. And do you, my  
Friends, who have but just listed yourselves  
in this holy War, every one of you say, with  
an humble yet cheerful Heart, In the Name  
of our GOD will we set up our Banners<sup>i</sup>.  
And if thus you wait on the Lord, you shall  
renew your Strength; and even the feeblest  
Soul shall be enabled by Divine Grace to

X 4 mount

<sup>c</sup> Luke ix. 62. <sup>f</sup> Phil. i. 6. <sup>g</sup> Prov. xxviii. 26.  
<sup>d</sup> Prov. iii. 5. <sup>h</sup> Psal. xx. 5.

312      *Let every Step be taken* <sup>i.</sup> S.B.R. 9.  
mount up with Wings as Eagles, and to press  
on from one Degree of Religious Improve-  
ment to another, while the Youths ~~shall faint~~  
~~and be weary,~~ and the Young Men sh<sup>o</sup>ll utterly  
fall <sup>k</sup>. The Apostle expresses, in the liveliest  
Manner, his Dependance on the Divine Re-  
deemer to communicate this Grace in a pre-  
per Degree, when he says, *Let us come boldly*  
*to the Throne of Grace, that we may obtain*  
*Mercy, and find Grace to help in Time of*  
*Need*<sup>l</sup>; plainly implying, that it may be  
obtained, if we have but Hearts to seek for  
it: Which, as on the one Hand it effectually  
takes off all idle Excuses for the Neglect of  
our Duty, pleaded from our own acknowl-  
ledged Weakness any further than we are  
supported by the *Divine Power*; so on the  
other Hand it animates the Heart, that sensi-  
ble of its various InfirmitieS desires never-  
theless to go forth to the Work of GOD,  
and to consecrate all its Faculties to his Ser-  
vice; *using them* such as they are *for GOD*,  
and humbly seeking from him the *Enlarge-  
ment* of them.

Go therefore, my Friends, into the *Di-  
vine Presence*; and while under a Sense of  
*this*, be not discouraged, tho' *Mountains of*  
*Opposition* may lie in your Way. Those  
*Mountains shall be made low*, and spread them-  
selves into a *Plain* before you <sup>m</sup>; while you  
go

<sup>k</sup> Isai. xl. 30, 31.    <sup>l</sup> Heb. iv. 16.    <sup>m</sup> Isai. xl. 4.

*SERMON with a Dependance upon GOD.* 313  
go forth under the Influences of the Spirit of the Lord, who is able to make all Grace abound in his People<sup>n</sup>.—Of this Paul in our Text was a most celebrated Instance, who not only received, as was here promised, *Directions what he should do*, but had *Strength* also given him to perform it; a *Strength*, which was *made perfect* and illustrious in his *Weakness*: And when, in Consequence of this, he had attained to very distinguishing Improvements in Religion, and had been enabled to act up in the most honourable Manner; not only to the *Christian Character* in general, but to that of a *Minister* and an *Apostle*, he acknowledges in all his abundant *Labours*, that it was *not he, but the Grace of GOD that was with him*<sup>p</sup>.

IF it be thus with you, my Brethren, you will be *established and built up in your most holy Faith*<sup>q</sup>. The most agreeable *Hopes* we form concerning you, when we see you under such serious *Impressions* as this *Discourse* supposes, will be answered; and they who have spoken to you the Word of GOD, on such Occasions as these, will have the Pleasure to think, that they have not run in vain, nor laboured in vain<sup>r</sup>.

AND now, if these *Directions*, which I have offered

<sup>m</sup> 2 Cor. ix. 8. <sup>o</sup> 2 Cor. xii. 9. <sup>p</sup> 1 Cor. xv. 10.

<sup>q</sup> Col. ii. 7. Jude, ver. 20. <sup>r</sup> Phil. ii. 16.

314 This may issue in Regeneration. SER. 9.  
offered to you with great Plainness and Freedom, but with the sincerest Desire for your Edification and Establishment in Religion, be seriously pursued, I shall have tho' Satisfaction of thinking, that tho' I might find you in the Number of the Unregenerate when I began these Lectures, I shall carry you on along with me through the only Head<sup>1</sup>, that yet remains to be handled; and shall indeed address myself to you, as those who were sometimes Darkness, but are now Light in the Lord<sup>1</sup>, when I proceed to address to those who have been renewed by Divine Grace, which I promised as my Last General, and with which I shall conclude my Discourses on this important Subject.

{ Ephes. v. 8.



S E R-



## S E R M O N X.

An ADDRESS to the REGENERATE,  
founded on the preceding Discourses.

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JAMES i. 18.

*Of his own Will begat he us with  
the Word of Truth, that we should  
be a Kind of First-Fruits of his  
Creatures.*

I INTEND the Words which I have now been reading, only as an *Introduction* to that *Address to the Sons and Daughters of the Lord Almighty*, with which I am now to conclude *these Lectures*; and therefore shall not enter into any Critical Discussion, either of them, or of the Context. I hope, God has made the Series of *these Discourses* in some Measure useful to those, for whose service

Service they were immediately interded; But if they have not been so to ~~all~~<sup>and</sup> if with Relation to many I have ~~languished~~<sup>languished</sup> in vain from Sabbath to Sabbath, I cannot be surpriz'd at it. *What am I better than my Fathers<sup>a</sup>?* It has in every Age been their Complaint, that they have stretched out their Hands all the Day to a disobedient and gain-saying People<sup>b</sup>; that the Bellows have been burnt, and the Lead consumed of the Fire, but the Dross has not been taken away: Such reprobate Silver have Multitudes been found<sup>c</sup>. Yea, the Lord Jesus Christ himself, who spake with such unequall'd Eloquence, with such Divine Energy, yet met with Multitudes, who were like the deaf Adder<sup>d</sup>; that would not hearken to the Voice of the wisest Charmer<sup>e</sup>: And surely the Disciple is not above his Master, nor the Servant above his Lord<sup>f</sup>.

WHEN indeed we consider the infinite Importance of the Message we address to you, Oh ye perishing Sinners, we hardly know how to give over, or to take a Denial. We feel a strong Impulse on our Hearts, to give *Line upon Line*, and *Precept upon Precept*<sup>f</sup>: As a Physician that loves his Patient, when he sees the Distemper prevailing,

<sup>a</sup> 1 Kings xix. 4.<sup>b</sup> Isai. lxv. 2. Rom. x. 21.<sup>c</sup> Jer. vi. 29, 30.<sup>d</sup> Psal. lviii. 4, 5.<sup>e</sup> Matt. x. 24.<sup>f</sup> Isai. xxviii. 10.

SEN. I. O! we must turn to such as will. 317

ing, and has run through the whole Range of Medicines, is ready, while Life yet remains, not entirely to give over, but to repeat again what he had prescribed unsuccessfully before. And if GOD spares our Lives, no Doubt many of those Things which I have before been urging, must in Substance be repeated. But at present I will desist: I know not what more, or farther, to say: And if you are utterly unimpress'd with what I have already laid before you, especially with regard to the *Character* of the Unre-generate,—the *Nature of Regeneration*,—the absolute *Necessity* of it,—and of the *Divine Agency* in producing it;—I know not what further to urge, and must leave you, either to the *Grace*, or the *Judgment* of GOD. The Time will certainly come, when you will all see, and own the *Importance* of these Things. *The Word of GOD* will, in one Sense or another, *take hold* of every Soul that hears it, and perhaps on some of you, in a very terrible Manner, and in a very little Time. But if it do, I may say with the Apostle *Paul*, when in Token of the Solemnity with which he spoke, *he shook his Raiment*, and took Leave of his obstinate Hearers, *I am clean from your Blood*; and since you refuse to be instructed, *I turn to those* who will regard what I say. And thus,

accord-

318 *The Regenerate should bless GOD* SER. IO.  
according to the Method I at first proposed,  
I proceed,

5.

SEVENTHLY, To conclude these Discourses with an *Address* to Those, who, by *Divine Grace*, are *experimentally* acquainted with this great Work of *Regeneration*; to shew them, how they ought to be *affected*, with the Consideration of the Truths that have been offered, and what *Improvement* they should make of such a Course of *Sermons*, as you have lately been attending.

OUT of a General Regard to the *Grace* of *GOD*, and the *Good of Souls*, you have attended on what has hitherto been spoken to Persons of a very *different Character*; and I hope, not altogether without some sensible Refreshment and Advantage: But now bear more immediately *for yourselves*, and suffer a *Word of Exhortation* in such Particulars as these.—Be *thankful to GOD* for what you have *experienced*:—Improve it as an *Engagement to behave in a suitable Manner*:—Study to *promote the Work of GOD* upon the Hearts of others: — And long for that *Blessed World*, where the *Change* that is now begun, and gradually advancing in your Souls, shall be *universal and compleat*.—Your own Wisdom and Piety have, no Doubt, prevented me in each of these Particulars; but you will be glad

SERMON for what they have experienc'd. 319  
glad to enter more fully into the Reflection,  
than you could do, while it was interming-  
ling itself with other Thoughts.

[I.] " RETURN the most affectionate  
" Acknowledgements of Praise to the  
" GOD of all Mercy, for the Expe-  
" rience you have had of a Regene-  
" rating Change." "

I WOULD now address this *Exhortation*  
and *Charge*, to every one of you, who thro'  
*Divine Grace* hope you can say, that you  
are born again; to all who can say, that  
*GOD has of his own Will begotten you with*  
*the Word of Truth, that you may be a Kind*  
*of First-Fruits of his Creatures.* To you I  
would say, *Sing unto the Lord, O ye Saints*  
*of his, and give Thanks at the Remembrance*  
*of his Holiness and Goodness<sup>h</sup>.* Give Thanks  
to the Father, who has made you meet to be  
Partakers of the Inheritance of the Saints in  
Light<sup>i</sup>. Join your Voices, and your Hearts,  
in the most cheerful *Hymns of Praise*, what-  
ever your different Circumstances are. Let  
the Young and the Old, the Rich and the  
Poor, the Honourable and the Mean, rejoice  
together; if any may be called Poor, who are  
thus enriched; if any may be accounted Mean,  
who are thus honoured. Bless the Lord at  
all Times, let his Praise continually be in  
your

<sup>h</sup> Psal. xxx. 4.    <sup>i</sup> Col. i. 12.

320 *The Importance of the Favour* SER. 10.  
your Mouths<sup>k</sup>; and endeavour to carry along  
with you, through the darkest Roads you  
travel, and the bitterest Sorrows you taste,  
*Chearfulness* in your *Hearts*, and *Praise* on  
your *Tongues*; considering — how important  
the *Blessing* is, with which the Lord has  
favoured you; — how *Few* there are, who  
partake of it; — and in the Midst of how  
much *Opposition*, “the *Divine Grace* has  
taken hold of your Souls, and wrought its  
Wonders of Love there.

i. CONSIDER, my *Christian Friends*,  
“how important this *Favour* is, which  
“God has bestowed upon you,” in  
thus begetting you, as a *Kind* of *First-*  
*Fruits* of his *Creatures*.

JUSTLY indeed may I say, *Behold, what*  
*manner of Love the Father bath bestowed upon*  
*us, that we should be regenerated by his*  
*Grace, and so be called, and that with*  
*Propriety, the Sons of GOD*<sup>1</sup>! Justly may I  
say to you, now you are assembled in the  
*Courts of the Lord*, in those emphatical  
*Words of David, Ob come, let us worship,*  
*and bow down; let us kneel before the Lord*  
*our Maker*<sup>m</sup>: For it is he, that has made us,  
and not we ourselves, with regard to this  
Second, as well as the First Creation; and  
we

<sup>k</sup> Psal. xxxiv. 1.   <sup>l</sup> 1 John iii. 1.   <sup>m</sup> Psal. xcv. 6.

SER. 10. Should excite to Thankfulness. 321

~~we~~ in Consequence of it, are in the noblest  
~~State~~ his People, and the Sheep of his Pasture :  
Enter therefore into his Gates with Thanks-  
giving, and into his Courts with Praise ; be  
thankful unto him, and bless his Name <sup>a</sup>.

My Brethren, it is a Favour, in which the *Salvation of your Souls* is concerned ; and can that be small ? or ought it ever to be thought of, but with the highest Emotion, and Enlargedness of Heart ? The gracious *Purposes of GOD* towards his *Children* are, to make every one of them *higher than the Kings of the Earth* <sup>b</sup>, to give them more ~~solid~~ Satisfaction than *Crowns* and *Kingdoms* can afford, and at length to raise them to a *Distant* <sup>c</sup> of Immortal Glory. Oh what Reason have you, with the *Apostle*, to say, *Blessed be the GOD and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his abundant Mercy, has begotten us again to a lively Hope, by the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the Dead, even to the Hope of an Inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in Heaven for us, who are kept by the Power of GOD through Faith unto Salvation* <sup>d</sup> ! Survey this great *Privilege*, which GOD has already given you, this high *Security*, these glorious *Hopes*. Has He not brought the *Beginning of Glory* already into

<sup>a</sup> Psal. c. 3, 4.

<sup>b</sup> Psal. lxxxix. 27.

<sup>c</sup> 1 Pet.

i. 3, 4, 5.

322 *It is a Favour that will issue SER. IO.*  
your Souls? Has He not wrought you to a  
*Filial Temper*, and taught you to cry *Abba*,  
*Father*? Has He not, in some Measure,  
formed and fashioned your Minds to a *Meet-*  
*ness* to dwell with *Angels* and *perfected Spirits*  
in Heaven? so that you can now say, even  
with Relation to *that* which you already  
*feel*, that *you are no more Strangers and Fo-*  
*reigners*, *but Fellow-Citizens with the Saints,*  
*and of the Household of GOD*. You are even  
now the Sons of GOD, and it doth not yet  
appear what you shall be<sup>1</sup>; but there's enough  
appears, and enough known at present, of what  
you shall be, and of what you are, to revise,  
to delight, to transport the Heart.

AND is not this too, *Oh thou afflicted*  
Soul, who art called to encounter with the  
most painful Difficulties, enough to be the  
Means of thy *Support*, and to afford thee  
Matter for thy *strong Consolation*? You that  
are *tossed with Tempests*<sup>2</sup>, and obliged to  
struggle under various and long-continued  
Burdens, have you not here a *Joy* that the  
World can neither bestow nor impair, a  
*Pleasure* in Publick and in Secret Duties,  
and a *Hope* which is *as the Anchor of the*  
*Soul both sure and steadfast, entering into that*  
*within the Vail*<sup>3</sup>, and so enabling you to  
out-ride these Storms and Tempests? How  
glorious

<sup>1</sup> Gal. iv. 6.

<sup>2</sup> Eph. ii. 19.

<sup>3</sup> John iii. 2.

<sup>1</sup> Isa. liv. 11.

<sup>2</sup> Heb. vi. 19.

glorious does your Lot appear, when view'd  
in the Light of Scripture? You are expressly told, *All Things are yours<sup>w</sup>:* *The Lord will give Grace and Glory, and no Good Thing will he with-hold from you<sup>x</sup>:* *All the Paths of the Lord are Mercy and Truth to you<sup>y</sup>;* and e'er long you shall see, how they are so. You have *a Sight by Faith of the Inheritance* appointed for *his Children*; but he does not intend merely *a distant Prospect* for you: *You shall go in, and possess that good Land<sup>z</sup>,* and shall e'er long be absent from *the Body, and present with the Lord<sup>a</sup>:* *Yea, the Lord Jesus Christ e'er long shall come to be glorified in his Saints, and to be admired in all them that believe<sup>b</sup>*; to be glorified and admired, in and by you in particular; when bearing the *Image of your Heavenly Father*, you shall rise far beyond *this Earth*, and all its vain *Anxieties*, and vainer *Amusements*, to dwell for ever in his Presence. And what is there in *this World*, that you imagine you want, which is by any Means to be compared with these *Enjoyments* and *Hopes?* Surely, Sirs, in such a View, you should be much more than content; and should feel your Inward *Admiration, Love, and Joy*, bursting the Bonds of Silence, and tuning your

Y 2

Voices,

<sup>w</sup> 1 Cor. iii. 21.    <sup>x</sup> Psal. lxxxiv. 11.    <sup>y</sup> Psal.xxv. 10.    <sup>z</sup> Deut. iv. 22.    <sup>a</sup> 2 Cor. v. 8.    <sup>b</sup> 2 Thess. i. 10.

324 *There are but few so happy* SER. 10.  
Voices, that have been broken by Sighs,  
into the most chearful and exalted *Ant<sup>hem</sup>*  
*of Praise*. Especially when you consider,

2. “ How few there are, that partake of  
“ this important Favour, which GOD  
“ has extended to you.”

I HOPE I need not, after all I have said, remind you at large, that I intend not by any Means to speak, as *excluding those* of *different Forms* and *different Experiences*; as if, in Consequence of that *Diversity*, they had *neither Part nor Lot in this Matter*. I hope that *many*, who are not so ready, as it were to be wish'd, to receive one another, are nevertheless in this Respect *received by Christ to the Glory of GOD*<sup>4</sup>. Yet the Temper and Conduct of the *Generality* of Mankind, even under a *Christian Profession*, too plainly shews, that they have the *Marks of Eternal Ruin* upon them: And one can form no *Hope* concerning them, consistent with the Tenor of the whole *Word of GOD*, any other than *this*, that possibly they may hereafter *be changed* into something contrary to what they are, and *in that Change be happy*.

Now that *you* are not left among the wide extended Ruins of Mankind, but are set as .

*Pillars*

\* Acts viii. 21.

\* Rom. xv. 7.

*Pillars in the Building of GOD*, is what you have been taught by the preceding Discourses to refer to the Grace of GOD, which has taken and polished you to the Form you now bear: Or, as the Evangelist expresses it, in Language more suitable to the Subject before us, *The Power, or Privilege, to become the Sons of GOD*, is what he gives to us ~~marily~~ as receive him; and it is manifest as to your Regeneration, that you are born, not of Blood, nor of the Will of the Flesh, nor of the Will of Man, but of GOD: For we love him, because he first loved us<sup>f</sup>; and whatever our Attainments be, there is no true Believer but will be ready, with the Apostle Paul, to say, *By the Grace of GOD I am what I am*<sup>g</sup>.

AND now when these Two Thoughts are taken in this Comparison with each other, how deeply should they impress our Minds! and how should it excite us to the most lively Gratitude, to consider, that when so many of our Fellow Creatures perish, even under the Sound of the Gospel; that when they live and die under the Power of a Corrupt and Degenerate Nature, despising all the Means which GOD has given them of becoming better, and turning them into the Occasion of greater Mischief; GOD

Y 3 . . . should

<sup>e</sup> John i. 12, 13.  
<sup>xv.</sup> 10.

<sup>f</sup> 1 John iv. 19.

<sup>g</sup> 1 Cor.

should graciously inclin<sup>e</sup> our Hearts to a wiser and better Choice ! It is indeed a melancholy Reflection, that the Number of those who are made wise to Salvation should be *so small* : yet it is an endearing Circumstance in the Divine Goodness to us, that when it is *so small*, we should be included in it : As no Doubt it would appear to every truly Religious Person in *the Ark*, that when but *Eight Souls were saved* from the Deluge, he should be *one*.—There is now a Remnant, says the Apostle, according to the Election of Grace <sup>b</sup> : To that Grace therefore should we render the Praise. We have indeed chosen him ; but it is in Consequence of his chusing us <sup>i</sup> : We have said, *The Lord is my Portion* ; but let us remember to bless Him, that *He has given us that Counsel* <sup>k</sup>, in Consequence of which we have been inclined to do it. Again,

3. CONSIDER “ in the Midst of how  
 “ much Opposition the Grace of GOD  
 “ has laid bold on your Souls, and  
 “ wrought its Wonders of Love  
 “ there.”

CHRISTIANS, look into your own *Hearts* ; yea, look back upon your own *Lives*, and see, whether many of you have not

<sup>a</sup> Rom. xi. 5. <sup>i</sup> Jchn xv. 16. <sup>k</sup> Psal. xvi. 5, 7. ,

not Reason to say, with the great Apostle,  
*It is a faithful Saying, and worthy of all Acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the World to save Sinners; of whom I am Chief<sup>1</sup>:*  
*And yet to me, who am less than the least of all Saints, is this Grace given<sup>m</sup>, that I should be a Regenerate Adopted Child of GOD, begotten to an Inheritance of Eternal Glory.*

“ “ Oh, may one Christian say, “ How  
“ obstinately did I strive against my own  
“ Happiness! like a poor Creature, that  
“ having received some dangerous Wound,  
“ and being Delirious with a Fever attend-  
“ ing it, struggles with the Hand that is  
“ stretched out to heal him. How did I  
“ draw back from the Yoke of GOD! How  
“ did I trifle with Convictions, and put them  
“ off from one Time to another! So that  
“ GOD might most righteously have  
“ awakened any Heart rather than mine. He  
“ admonished me by his Word, and by his  
“ Providence: He sent Afflictions; he  
“ wrought out Deliverances for me: And  
“ yet I went on to harden my Heart, as if  
“ I had been afflicted, and delivered, that  
“ I might work greater Abominations<sup>n</sup>; till  
“ the Lord being merciful to me, laid hold  
“ upon me, and drew me out of Sodom<sup>o</sup>. ”

Y 4

AND

<sup>1</sup> 1 Tim. i. 15.   <sup>m</sup> Ephes. iii. 8.   <sup>n</sup> Jer. vii. 10.  
<sup>o</sup> Gen. xix. 16.

AND here another Christian will be ready,  
 to say within himself, " If the ~~Grace~~<sup>of</sup> /  
 " GOD wrought sooner upon me, when  
 " my Soul was more pliant, when my  
 " Heart was comparatively tender, in my  
 " fancy or Childhood, or in ear'y Youth ; yet  
 " what ungrateful Returns have I since  
 " made for his Mercy ! How defective have  
 " I been in those Fruits of Holiness, which  
 " might reasonably have been expected from  
 " me, who have so long a Time been  
 " planted in the House of the Lord. Alas  
 " for me ! that I have flourished no more in  
 " the Courts of my GOD<sup>r</sup>. How often  
 " have I forgotten and forsaken him, how care-  
 " less and negligent has my Spirit been, how  
 " inconstant my Walk, how indolent my  
 " Behaviour, for these many Years that have  
 " passed since I was first brought into his  
 " Family ! How little have I done in his  
 " Service, in Proportion to the Advantages  
 " I have enjoyed ! All this He foresaw ; all  
 " the Instances, in which my Goodness would  
 " be as a Morning Cloud, and as the Early  
 " Dew<sup>q</sup> ; all the Instances, in which this per-  
 " verse Heart of mine, so prone to back-  
 " slide, should turn aside and start back  
 " from him like a deceitful Bow<sup>r</sup> : And  
 " yet He has Mercy upon me, I know not.  
 " why : I can't pretend to account for it  
 " any

• Psal. xcii. 13. <sup>q</sup> Hos. vi. 4. <sup>r</sup> Psal. lxxviii. 57..

" any otherwise than by saying, *Even so,*  
 " *Father, for so it seemed good in thy Sight*<sup>t</sup> :  
 " *Thou hast Mercy on whom thou wilt have*  
 " *Mercy, and thou hast Compassion on whom*  
 " *thou wilt have Compassion*<sup>c</sup>. I have re-  
 " volted deeply from thee, again and again;  
 " yet thou sufferest me not to be lost to this  
 " very Day, nor wilt thou ever suffer it:  
 " *Thou restorest my Soul; thou leadest me in*  
 " *the Paths of Righteousness for thy Name's*  
 " *Sake*<sup>u</sup>. Having therefore obtained Help  
 " *of GOD, I continue to this Day*<sup>w</sup>: And  
 " *surely Goodness and Mercy shall follow me*  
 " *all the Days of my Life; and unworthy*  
 " *as I am, so much as to enter into thine*  
 " *House below, I shall dwell in the House*  
 " *of the Lord for ever above*<sup>x</sup>. Thus,  
 " *Lord, thou makest me, as it were, a*  
 " *Wonder to myself; and I hope to express*  
 " *my Admiration and my Gratitude through-*  
 " *out Eternal Ages: And if I can vie with*  
 " *the rest of thy Redeemed Ones in nothing*  
 " *else, I will at least do it in bowing low*  
 " *before thy Throne, and acknowledging*  
 " *that I am of the Number of the most*  
 " *'unworthy, in whom my Lord has been*  
 " *pleased to glorify the Riches of his Mercy,*  
 " *and the Freedom of his Grace.'*

IN

<sup>f</sup> Matt. xi. 26.    <sup>t</sup> Rom. ix. 15.    <sup>u</sup> Psal. xxiii. 3.  
<sup>v</sup> Acts xxvi. 22.    <sup>x</sup> Psal. xxvii. 6.

330 *Improve it as an Engagement* SER. IO.

IN the mean Time, Christians, I call you, often to entertain yourselves with such Vigws as these, often to excite your Hearts by such lively Considerations: I call you, *in the Name of your Father and your Saviour*, a whole Life of Gratitude and Praise. And this leads me to add,

[2.] " IMPROVE those *Experiences*—you  
" have had of *Divine Grace*, as an  
" *Engagement to behave in a suitable*  
" *Manner.*"

REMEMBER the lively Admonition of the Text, that you were begotten by him for this very Purpose, that you should be a Kind of First-Fruits of his Creatures. See therefore, that you be entirely consecrated to him, and behave as becomes the Children of GOD, in the Midst of a crooked and perverse Generation; being not only harmless and blameless among them, but shining as Lights in the World, and holding forth that Word of Life<sup>1</sup>, by which he has begotten you to himself, and quickened you when you were dead in Trespasses and Sins<sup>2</sup>. God has now brought you into a most honourable Relation: He may therefore well expect more, much more from you, than from others. He has made you Priests to himself<sup>3</sup>; and you are

<sup>1</sup> Phil. ii. 15, 16. <sup>2</sup> Ephes. ii. 1, 5. <sup>3</sup> Rev. i. 6.

SER. 10. to behave in a suitable Manner. 331

are therefore to offer up Spiritual Sacrifices, acceptable to GOD by Jesus Christ<sup>b</sup>. You were once Darkness, but now are ye Light in the Lord; walk therefore as Children of Light<sup>c</sup>. Remember, you are not your own<sup>d</sup>; your Time, your Possessions, and all your Capacities for Service, are the Property of your Heavenly Father.—And permit me to remind you, that if you desire to see this Doctrine of Regeneration prevail, you, who pretend to be experimentally acquainted with it, must take great Care, that your Behaviour may not only be Innocent, but Exemplary: Otherwise many will be ready to blaspheme the holy Name of that GOD<sup>e</sup>, whom you call your Father; and you are like to bring a Reproach upon the Household of Faith, which probably you will never be able to roll away.

CHRISTIANS, the Dignity of our Birth and our Hopes is too little considered and regarded; and the Reason why the World thinks so meanly of it, is, because we ourselves are so insensible of its Excellency. Did we apprehend it more, we should surely be more solicitous to walk worthy of that Calling wherewith we are called<sup>f</sup>, that High and Holy Calling. Let me therefore exhort you, to endeavour to loosen your Affections more from these Entanglements of Time and Sense, which

so

<sup>b</sup> 1 Pet. ii. 5.      <sup>c</sup> Ephes. v. 8.      <sup>d</sup> 1 Cor. vi. 19.  
<sup>e</sup> 2 Sam. xii. 14.      <sup>f</sup> Ephes. iv. i. ;

so much debase our Minds, and dishonour our Lives. Yield yourselves unto G O D; as those that are alive from the Dead<sup>e</sup>: Employ, with a growing Zeal, to the Honour of God, that renewed Life which he has given you: Be not conformed to this World, but be ye transformed by the Renewing of your Minds<sup>h</sup>: And let your Conversation and Behaviour be like<sup>f</sup> those, who feel<sup>g</sup> the constraining Influences of Divine Love<sup>i</sup>; who are, not in Form, but in Reality, devoted to G O D; and who would be continually waiting for his Salvation<sup>k</sup>, with that Temper, in which you could most desire, that Salvation should find you when it comes.

[3.] LET those, who have experienced the Power of Divine Grace themselves, “ study to promote the Work of G O D “ upon the Hearts of others.”

LABOUR, as much as possible, to spread this Temper, which G o D has wrought in your Hearts; for you can't but know, that with it you spread true Happiness, which alone is to be found, in that Intercourse with the great Author of our Being, for which this lays a Foundation, and in the regular Exercise of those Powers which are thus<sup>l</sup>.

<sup>e</sup> Rom. vi. 13.      <sup>h</sup> Rom. xii. 2.      <sup>j</sup> 2 Cor.  
v. 14.      <sup>k</sup> Gen. xlvi. 18.

thus sanctified. No sooner was Paul converted himself, but he presently set himself to bring others to Christ, and to preach the Faith which once he destroyed<sup>1</sup>. And David speaks of it as the Effect of God's pardoning Love to him. *Then will I teach Transgressors thy Ways, and Sinners shall be converted unto thee<sup>m</sup>.*

If therefore God has called us to the Office of the Ministry, as the Experience of this Change on our own Hearts will be our best Qualification for our Publick Work, (and indeed such a Qualification that nothing else can supply the Want of it;) so it will surely excite us in a very powerful Manner, to apply vigorously to this Care. That which we have not only heard, but seen with our Eyes, and looked upon, and handled of the Word of Life, let us declare to others; that their Fellowship also may be with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ<sup>n</sup>. Let us declare it in our Publick Discourses, and never be ashamed to bear our Testimony to that Grace, to which we are so much indebted; & that Grace, by which we are what we are<sup>o</sup>. Let us warn every Man, and teach every Man the absolute Necessity of Regeneration; and expose the Vanity of all those Hopes, which are built upon any fair

<sup>1</sup> Gal. i. 23.

<sup>m</sup> Psal. li. 13.

<sup>n</sup> 1 John i. 1, 3.

<sup>o</sup> 1 Cor. xv. 10.

334 Both Ministers and Hearers SER. 10.  
fair Outside, on any moral Decency of Behaviour, on any humane Turn of Temper, on any warm Flight of Imagination or Emotion of Passions, while the Soul continues unrenewed and unsanctified. Let us endeavour to save Men with Fear, pulling them out of the Fire<sup>p</sup>, which, if they are yet Unregenerate, is just ready to kindle upon them. And let us be often reviewing our respective Flocks, that we may see, who they are, concerning whom there is Reason to entertain this Fear; that proper Applications may be made to them in Private, as well as in Publick; that joining our Admonitions to our Sermons, and our Prayers and Examples to both, we may at least deliver our own Souls<sup>q</sup>, if we can't deliver theirs. But in Proportion to the Degree that such a Spirit prevails in us, there is very great Encouragement to hope, it will be propagated to them, and that our Labour shall not be in vain in the Lord<sup>r</sup>.

AND let me beseech you, my beloved Hearers in other Stations of Life, that you would not imagine the Work is entirely ours, that you have nothing to do with it. Are we alone redeemed by the Blood of the Son of GOD? Are we alone, renewed and sanctified by his Grace? Are we alone the Brethren

<sup>p</sup> Jude, ver. 23. <sup>q</sup> Ezek. xxxiii. 9. <sup>r</sup> 1 Cor. xv. 58.

bren and Friends of Mankind, that the Generous Care and Endeavour to promote their Eternal Happiness should be entirely devolved upon us? We wish so well to the World, and permit us to say, we wish so well to you, to your own Religious Consolation and Establishment, to your Comfortable Account, to your Eternal Reward, that we can't but earnestly exhort you all, even as many as have tasted that the Lord is Gracious<sup>1</sup>, that in this Respect you join, not only, as I trust you do, your Prayers with ours, but that you also join your Endeavours.

LET me particularly address this Exhortation to those of you, who bear any distinguished Office in the Society, to whom therefore its Religious Interest is dear by additional Ties. Let me address to those of you; whose Age and Experience, in the Human and the Divine Life, gives you something of a Natural Authority in your Application, and commands a distinguish'd Regard. Look round about you, and observe the State of Religion in your Neighbourhood; and labour to the utmost to propagate, not so much this or that particular Opinion, or Form of Worship, but Real Vital Christianity in the World. Bear your Testimony to it on all proper Occasions: Be not ashamed of it in your familiar Discourse:

course : And above all, labour to *adorn it* by your *Actions*. And when you see any under serious Impressions, as it is certain they will have a great Deal discouraging and difficult to break through ; and as the Devil and his Instruments, among whom I must necessarily reckon *Licentious Company*, will be doing their utmost to draw them back into the Snare of the Fowler ; let me exhort and charge you, to be as solicitous to save, as others are to destroy. I know, how many *Excuses* our cowardly and indolent Hearts are ready to find out upon such an Occasion ; but I think those Words of Solomon are a sufficient *Answer* to all, and I beg you would seriously revolve them ; *If thou forbear to deliver them that are drawn unto Death, and those that are ready to be slain ; if thou sayest, Behold, we knew it not ; doth not he that pondereth the Heart, consider it ? and he that keepeth thy Soul, (thine, Oh Christian, with such peculiar and gracious Care,) doth not he know it ? and shall not he render to every Man according to his Works ?* He will assuredly remember, and will abundantly reward, every *Work of Faith, and every Labour of Love* ; and we are insensible of our own truest Interest, if we do not see how much it is concern'd here.

LET

<sup>t</sup> Prov. xxiv. 11, 12.    <sup>u</sup> 1 Thess. i. 3. Heb. vi. 10.

LET me especially leave this Exhortation with you, who are *Parents and Heads of Families*. And one would imagine, there should need but little Importunity, in such a Case as this. One would think, your own Hearts should speak to you, upon such an Occasion, in very Pathetick Language. Look upon your dear *Children*, to whom you have conveyed a *Nature* which you know to be *degenerate and corrupt*; and be earnest in your *Prayers before God*, and your *Endeavours with them*, that it may be *renewed*. And take Care, that you do not in this Sense *despise the Soul of your Man-Servant, or of your Maid-Servant*<sup>w</sup>. GOD has brought them under your Care, it may be in those Years of Life, in which, on the one Hand, they are most capable of being *instructed and seriously impressed*; and in which, on the other Hand, they are also most in Danger of being *corrupted*. Perhaps their *Relation to you, and Abode with you*, is the most *advantageous Circumstance*, which may occur in their whole Lives: See therefore that you *seize it with a holy Eagerness*; and amidst all the *Charges* you give them, relating to your own Business, *neglect not that of the One Thing needful*<sup>x</sup>; and labour heartily to bring them to the *Honour*

Z

and

338     *All should earnestly pray*    SER. 10.  
and *Happiness*, which is common, to all  
*GOD's Servants*, and peculiar to them  
alone.

LET me conclude this Part of my Address, with intreating you all, to express your Concern for the Souls of others<sup>y</sup>, by your importunate Prayers to GOD for them. Pray for the Success of Gospel-Ordinances; and for a Blessing on the Labours of all GOD's faithful Servants throughout our whole Land, of one or another Denomination in Religion. Yea, pray that throughout the whole World, GOD would revive his Work in the Midst of the Years<sup>y</sup>; that the Religion of his Son, by which so many Souls have been regenerated, refined, and saved, may be universally propagated; and that all, who are vigorously engaged in so important, tho' so self-denying a Work, may find that the Hand of the Lord is with them, and so Multitudes believe and turn unto the Lord<sup>z</sup>; so that his Sons may be brought from far, and his Daughters from the Ends of the Earth<sup>a</sup>; that the Barren may rejoice, and she that did not travail with Child, may break forth into Singing, and cry aloud; that the Children of Nations now Strangers to Christ, may be, more than of those that are already espoused to him<sup>b</sup>. And then,

[4.] LET :

<sup>y</sup> Hab. iii. 2.      <sup>z</sup> Acts xi. 21.      <sup>a</sup> Isai. xliii. 6.  
<sup>b</sup> Mai. liv. 1.      Gal. iv. 27.

[4.] LET all that are born again, “ long  
 “ for that blessed World, where the  
 “ Work of GOD shall be compleated,  
 “ and we shall appear with a Dign-  
 “ ity and Glory becoming his Chil-  
 “ dren.”

As for GOD, his Work is perfect<sup>c</sup>; and the Time, the happy Time is approaching, when we shall know, and the whole World shall know, in another Manner than we now do, what our Heavenly Father has intended for us in begetting us to himself.—Whatever our Attainments here may be, we know at present but in part<sup>d</sup>; and with whatever Integrity of Soul we now walk before GOD, we are sanctified but in part: And hereupon we find, and must expect to find, the Flesh striving against the Spirit, as well as the Spirit against the Flesh; so that in many Respects we cannot do the Things that we would<sup>e</sup>: And in Proportion to the Degree in which our Nature is refined and brightened, we are more sensible of the Evil of these Corruptions that remain within us; so that tho' we are not, in a strict Propriety of Speech, carnal and sold under Sin, but do indeed delight in the Law of GOD after

340 *GOD will e'er long compleat* SER. 10.  
*the Inward Man*<sup>f</sup>, yet in the Humility of  
our Hearts we are often borrowing that  
pathetick Complaint, *Oh wretched Man that*  
*I am, who shall deliver me from the Body of*  
*this Death*<sup>g</sup>!—But let it be remembered,  
Christians, as the Matter of your Joy, that  
the Struggle shall not be *perpetual*, that it  
shall not indeed be *long*. *Look up* with Plea-  
sure then, and *lift up your Heads*, for your  
*Redeption draweth nigh*<sup>h</sup>: The Time is  
approaching, *when that which is perfect shall*  
*come*, and *that which is in part shall be done*  
*away*<sup>i</sup>. You are now the *Children of GOD*;  
but *it does not appear* to every Eye, that  
you are so: *The World knows us not*<sup>k</sup>; nor  
are we to wonder at it; for even *Christ our*  
*Lord* was once *unknown*, and appeared in so  
much Meanness, and so much Calamity,  
that an undiscerning and carnal Eye could  
not have discovered, who, and what he was.  
But there is a Day appointed for *the Mani-*  
*festation of the Sons of GOD*<sup>l</sup>, (as the Apostle  
*Paul* most happily expresses it;) when he  
will *manifest them* to each other, and *mani-*  
*fest them also* to the whole World. They  
shall not always live thus *at a Distance* from  
their *Father's House*, and under those Dispens-  
ations

<sup>f</sup> Rom. vii. 14, 22.      <sup>g</sup> Ver. 24.      <sup>h</sup> Luke xxii.  
28.      <sup>i</sup> Cor. xiii. 10.      <sup>k</sup> 1 John iii. 1, 2.      <sup>l</sup> Rom.  
viii. 19.

sations of Providence that look so much like *Disregard* and *Neglect*: But he will take them Home, and gather them to himself. E'er long, *Christians*, he will call these *Heaven-born Spirits* of yours, that are now aspiring towards him, to dwell in his immediate *Presence*: He will receive you to himself; and you shall stand, where no Sinner shall have a Place, in the *Congregation of the Righteous*<sup>m</sup>, and shall have an *Inheritance among the Saints in Light*, the Saints in Holiness and Glory.—Oh happy Day! when dropping this Body in the Grave, we shall ascend pure and joyful Spirits to that triumphant *Assembly*, where there is not one vitiated Affection, not one foolish Thought, to be found among the Thousands and Ten Thousands of God's *Israel*! Oh blessed Period of a *Regenerate State*! Though all the Schemes of the *Divine Love* were to rest here, and these Bodies were for ever to be laid aside, and utterly to be lost in the *Grave*; the rejoicing Soul might say, “Lord, it is enough!” And it might be indeed enough for us; but it is not enough to answer the gracious Purposes of God's Paternal *Love*. God will shew, in the most conspicuous Manner, what a *Family* he has rais'd to himself among the Children of Men;

<sup>m</sup> Psal. i. 5.

Men ; and therefore he will assemble them all in their compleat Persons, and will do it with solemn Pomp and magnificent Parade. He will for this Purpose send his own Son, with all his Holy Angels<sup>n</sup>, and will cause the Bodies of Millions of his Children that have long dwelt in the Dust, to spring out of it at once, in Forms of Beauty and Lustre, worthy their Relation to him. This therefore is with beautiful Propriety called by the Apostle, *the Adoption, even the Redemption of our Body*<sup>o</sup>; alluding to the Publick Ceremony, with which *Adoptions* among the Ancients were solemnly confirm'd and declar'd, after they had been more privately transacted between the Parties immediately concerned.

ON Christians, how reasonable is it, that our Souls should be rising, with a secret Ardour, towards this *Blessed Hope*, this *Glorious Abode*!—It is pleasant for the Children of GOD to meet, and converse with one another upon Earth ; so pleasant, that I wonder they do not more frequently form themselves into little Societies, in which, under that Character, they should join their Discourses and their Prayers.— It is delightful to address to those, that, we trust, thro' Grace are born of GOD. No Discourses

SER. IO. where the Work will be perfected. 343  
courses are more *pleasant*, than those that suit them : And could *We* that are the *Ministers of Christ*, reasonably hope, that we had *none but such* to attend our Labours, we should joyfull confine our Discourses to such Subjects.—Yet while we are here, we see *Imperfections in others*; we *feel them* yet more painfully *in ourselves*: And as there is no *pure unmix'd Society*, no *Fellowship* on Earth that is compleatly *holy and without Blemish*, so there is now no *pure Delight*, no *perfect Pleasure* to be met with here.—Oh when shall I depart from this *mixed Society*, and reach that *State*, where all is *Good*, all *Glorious*! where I shall see my *Heavenly Father*, and all my *Brethren in the Lord*; and shall behold them *all* for ever *acting up* to their *Character*! All giving *Thanks to the Father*, who has made us meet to be *Partakers of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light*! All for ever blessing and serving the Great *Redeemer*; and without One *Ungenerous Action*, One Reflecting Word, One Suspicious Thought, for ever serving each other *in Love*, rejoicing in each other's *Happiness*, and with the most prudent and stedfast Application for ever studying and labouring to *improve it*!

WITH the most *earnest Desire*, that you my *Dear Brethren and Friends*, may at length

length attain to this State of Perfection and Glory; and with a cheerful Expectation through Divine Grace, that I shall e'er long meet many of you in it; I close this Sermon, and these Discourses: Not without an humble Hope, that when we arrive at this Blessed World, these Hours which we have spent together in the House of GOD in attending them, will come into a pleasant Remembrance; and that the GOD of all Grace, to whose Glory they are faithfully devoted, and to whose Blessing they are humbly committed, will honour them as the Means of increasing his Family, as well as of feeding and quickening those who are already his Regenerate Children. Amen!

F I N I S.



T H E

# Scripture-Doctrine

O F

## S A L V A T I O N b y G R A C E through F A I T H,

Illustrated and improved in

## T W O S E R M O N S:

The Substance of which was Preached at

## R O W E L L in Northamptonshire.

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*By P. DODDRIDGE, D. D.*

---

Published, with some Enlargements, at the  
earnest Request of the Congregation there.

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*I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ ; for it is  
the Power of GOD unto Salvation to every one  
that believeth. Rom. i. 16.*

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T O T H E  
CHURCH and CONGREGATION  
O F  
PROTESTANT DISSENTERS

At *R O W E L L,*

To whom the Substance of these SERMONS  
was preached, and at whose Desire they  
are published.

*My Dear Brethren and Friends,  
beloved in our common Lord,*

HEN I first preached these plain Sermons to my own Congregation, which I here offer to your Perusal, I was much surprized at the *Request* which several of them made, that they might be *printed*: But I was yet more surpriz'd, when after having delivered the Substance of them in *One Discourse* at *Rowell* some Time after, you so unanimously and affectionately made *that Request* your own. I

## D E D I C A T I O N.

apprehended, that tho' the many excellent *Treatises* we have *on this Subject* already, might excuse my Backwardness to comply with the *First Motion* of this Kind; yet absolutely to have refused your *repeated Solicitation* might have appeared *disrespectful* to my good Friends, and perhaps have looked like some *Unwillingness* to bear my *Testimony* to this great and important *Doctrine* in an Age, in which the Credit of many *Evangelical Truths* seems to be fallen very low.

I AM really sorry, I have delayed this little Service ~~so~~ long; but it was chiefly owing to my Desire of finishing my *Sermons on REGENERATION*, which indeed cost me more Labour than I at first apprehended. That seem'd a Busines of such *Importance*, that I knew not how to interrupt it: But as they are now almost printed off, I send out *these Discourses* as a Kind of *Supplement to them*; and therefore they are printed in a Form very fit to bind up with them. The Delay is more excusable, as *SALVATION BY GRACE* is not a Subject which grows out of Date in a few Months. This glorious *Doctrine* has been the *Joy* of the Church in all Ages *on Earth*; and it will be the *Song* of all that have received it in Truth throughout the Ages of Eternity, and be pursued in

## D E D I C A T I O N.

in the *Heavenly Regions* with ever-growing  
Admiration and Delight.

I CANNOT conclude this *short Address*, without congratulating you on the abundant Goodness of GOD to you as a *Church*, in bringing among you that worthy and excellent Person \*, under whose Pastoral Care you are now so happily placed. I know, he is a faithful Witness to the *Truths of the Gospel*, and rejoice in that rich Abundance of *Gifts* and *Grace* which render him so fit to state and improve them, in the most advantagious, as well as most agreeable and delightful Manner. I hope, and believe, that the *Grace* he so humbly owns his Dependance upon, will add happy Success to his Labours: And I heartily pray, that you and neighbouring Churches may long be *happy in him*; and that GOD, who has by such various and gracious Interpositions in your Favour expres'd his Paternal Care of you, may still delight to *dwell among you*. May he multiply you with *Men like a Flock*, daily adding to his *Church* among you such as shall be saved! May your Souls continually rejoice in his *Salvation*! And may you ever walk worthy of the Lord, and prove by the Integrity and Purity, the Spirituality and Usefulness of your whole Behaviour, that this

The Reverend Mr. Jonathan Saunderson.

## D E D I C A T I O N.

this *Grace of GOD which brings Salvation* has enter'd with Power into your Hearts; and that it is your Care and Delight, to *improve it*, as well as to *bear of it!* To contribute to this blessed End, by this or any other Attempt of cordial Love and faithful Respect, will be an unspeakable Pleasure to,

*My Dear Friends,*

*Your very affectionate Servant*

*in the Bonds of our common Lord,*

NORTHAMPTON,  
Sept. 1. 1741.

P. DODPRIDGE.

THE



T H E  
Scripture-Doctrine  
O F  
S A L V A T I O N b y G R A C E  
through F A I T H.

---

S E R M O N I.

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E P H E S . ii . 8 .

*For by Grace are ye saved, through  
Faith; and that not of yourselves;  
it is the Gift of G O D.*

  
Y OU are often, my Dear Brethren  
and Friends, bearing of the Duties  
of a Religious Life: And it can-  
not but be a Pleasure to every faith-  
ful Minister of Christ to observe, how willing,  
nay, how glad you are to hear of them; and  
with Respect to many of you, how ready  
B you

you are to practise them. But I am now coming to you with a renewed Admonition on another Head, which is always to be taken in Connection with the former; and which, I persuade myself, will in that View, be welcome to you all. I am to inculcate it upon you, that when you have done your utmost, how much soever that be, you should still say, that you are unprofitable Servants<sup>a</sup>; and endeavour to maintain a deep Sense of it upon your Hearts, thus, as the Apostle admonishes the Believing Ephesians in the Words of the Text, *By Grace ye are saved through Faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the Gift of GOD.*

THE Apostle, in his preceding Discourse, speaks of the happy Change which the Gospel had made in the State of these poor Heathens. He freely acknowledges on this Occasion, that the Jews were likewise in a very bad State, and if not entirely sunk into the same Enormities, yet were by Nature Children of Wrath, even as others<sup>b</sup>. So that on the whole, both were, (as it might be expressed by an easy and very proper Figure,) dead in Trespasses and Sins<sup>c</sup>, indisposed for any Religious Sensations and Actions, and far more odious to God, than a putrid Carcase is to Men.

<sup>a</sup> Luke xvii. 10.

<sup>b</sup> Eph. ii. 3.

<sup>c</sup> Ver. 1, 5.

Men. But he adds, that *GOD by his Grace had saved them*; that his unmerited Goodness had begun their *Salvation*, and having thus far carried it on, would undoubtedly complete it: And that he might impress their Minds the more deeply with it, he repeats it again, *By Grace ye are saved*. So much was the Apostle *Paul* concerned to inculcate a *Doctrine*, which some are ready to look upon as *unnecessary*, and others perhaps as *dangerous*. But the Apostle's Authority is abundantly enough to outweigh all that can be laid in the opposite Scale. And it will appear from what I have further to offer, that if it had not in this View to direct a *Sanction* from his express *Testimony*, the Conclusion would follow by the justest Deduction of Argument from *Principles so fundamental to the Gospel*, that they cannot be denied without subverting its whole Superstructure.

AND here, if I would treat the Subject in its full Extent, I might consider, what we mean by *Gospel-Salvation*. But I content myself at present with telling you in a few Words, that it implies "a *Deliverance*" from that ruinous and calamitous Condition, into which by our *Apostacy* from " " *GOD we are fallen*;" and also includes " " our being restored to the *Divine Favour*, and all the happy Effects of it,

4      *The Nature of Saving Faith.*    S E R. I.

" as extending, not only to Time, but to  
" *Eternity.*"

I MIGHT also consider at large the *Nature* of that *Faith*, to which the *Promises of Salvation* are made. But that is a Subject you have heard so frequently explained, that I shall only remind you of that general Account of it, which has often been illustrated among you. "*Saving Faith*," for of that we are now speaking, " is such a *P i u a s i o n*, that *Christ* " " is the great *Messia h*, the *Son of G O D*, " and the *Saviour of Men*; and such a *L -* " " *fire and Expectat i o n*: of the *Blessings* he has " procured under that Character; as shall " engage us chearfully to *commit our Souls* " to him in his appointed Method of *Salva -* " " *tion*, with a *Disposition* cordially to *devote* " " *ourselves* to his Service in all the *Ways* " of *Holy and Evangelical Obedience.*" The several Branches of this *Definition* are to be taken in their Connection with each other; and then, there would be no Difficulty in shewing from the whole Tenor of *Scripture*, that as nothing short of this can be acceptable to *G O D*, so where-ever such a *Principle* really is, the Soul in which it is found is intitled to all the *Blessings of the Covenant of Grace*, and has all the Security for *Eternal Happiness* which the *Promise and Oath of G O D* can give. I might also easily tell you,

~~Sec.~~ I. *The Distribution of the Subject.* 5  
you,) that *this* is such a Description of *Faith*,  
as effectually secures the Interest of *Practical Religion*, and guards against every *preposterous Hope*, which may be formed in a  
Soul destitute of a *Principle of Universal Holiness.*

But waving the further Prosecution of  
these *Preliminaries* to our Subject, which  
we have Occasion so often to dilate upon,  
I shall make it my present Busines,

I. To consider, how we may be said to  
be *saved through Faith.*

II. How it appears, that in Consequence  
of this, we are *saved by Grace.*

III. I SHALL examine the Force of the  
*Apostle's* additional Argument, which  
is drawn from the Consideration,  
that *Faith is the Gift of GOD.* And  
then,

IV. I SHALL collect some *Inferences* from  
the whole. And may GOD write on  
our Hearts, as with the Point of a Dia-  
mond, them and the Premises on which  
they are founded !

I. WE are to consider, *in what Sense* it may be said, that Christians are *saved* through Faith.

YE are, says the Apostle, [σωτεροι] the Saved ones,—the Persons who have already received the Beginnings of *Salvation*, and the certain Pledge of its compleat Accomplishment,—[δια της πιστεως] *through*, or by Means of, *Faith*.

Now I apprehend, we shall take in the full Sense of the Apostle's Assertion, and all that it is most necessary to believe and know on this Subject; if we acknowledge and remember,—that *Faith* is absolutely necessary in Order to our *Salvation*, so that we cannot possibly be saved without it;—and also, that every one who hath *this Faith*, shall undoubtedly obtain *Salvation*:—But yet, that after all, a Christian is not to ascribe his *Salvation* to the Merit of his *Faith*, but entirely to that of the Lord Jesus Christ, the great *Author* and *Finisher* of it. These are Three very obvious Remarks: None is so weak, but he may easily understand them; and yet, I speak very seriously when I say, they seem to me to contain the Sum of all that is most important in the many large Volumes which have been writ on the Subject.

"*FAITH* is so absolutely necessary  
" to our *Salvation*, that we cannot  
" possibly be saved without it."

So ~~our~~ Lord tells us, in the most express and emphatical Forms of Speech : *If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your Sins*<sup>d</sup>, which most certainly implies the *Loss of Salvation*, and indeed much more. And elsewhere the Incarnate Wisdom and Truth of GOD saith, *He that believeth not, shall be damned*<sup>e</sup>. *He shall not*, as the Baptist says, *live*<sup>f</sup> : Nay, as our Lord himself expresses it in the strongest Terms, *He that believeth not, is condemned already*; not only on Account of all those other Sins, for which the *Wrath of GOD*, to which he became immediately obnoxious, still abideth upon him; but for this additional Reason of dreadful Provocation, because he hath not believed in the venerable and majestic Name of the only-begotten Son of GOD<sup>g</sup>.

WITHOUT this *Faith*, there is no Knowledge that will save a Man; tho' it should be the most various, and the most exact Knowledge of the most Divine and important Subjects, which ever enter'd into a Human Mind. So far is it from this, that one need not

B 4 . . . scruple

<sup>d</sup> John viii. 24.      <sup>e</sup> Mark xvi. 16.      <sup>f</sup> John iii. 36.      <sup>g</sup> John iii. 18.

scruple to say, a Man might as reasonably expect to be saved by Skill in the ~~Moral~~ <sup>Mathematical</sup> ~~Divinity~~ <sup>Musick</sup>, as by Skill in ~~Moral~~ <sup>Rational</sup> ~~Divinity~~ <sup>Speculation</sup>, tho' it were in its most essential Branches, if after all it were no more than mere Speculation.

AND it is no less certain, that without this Faith, Morality will not save a Man; be it ever so unexceptionable, be it ever so exemplary. This is indeed much better than the former; but if there be nothing more, it will be fatally ineffectual to the great Purpose which we have now in View. I speak not now, as you may easily imagine, of such a continual and uniform Obedience to the Divine Will, as perfectly answers the Demands of God's Original Law; for no Man ever has attained to this, or will ever in Fact attain to it in this World: But I speak of what the World generally calls Morality, a Freedom from gross Impiety and scandalous Vice, yea, tho' attended with the Practice of the Humane and the Social Virtues. This is indeed amiable and honourable, so far as it goes; and will undoubtedly have its Reward, in the Pleasure of such a Conduct, in the Esteem and Love of Mankind, and in the Possession of many Temporal Advantages and Blessings, which in the common Course of Providence are connected with it. But, alas,

~~CHAP.~~ I. none can be sav'd without it. 9

knowing : And as a Man may be temperate in himself; just, faithful, and benevolent to Men ; without having any Appearance of Religion towards GOD, or making any Pretence to it : So he may have some Sense of GOD upon his Spirit, which one would think none but an Atheist could entirely avoid, while for the Neglect, or it may be the Rejection of the Gospel, he stands exposed to its Sentence of Condemnation. If Christ be not regarded as the Rock on which we build our Hopes, the Foundation is sandy, and will be ruinous ; and if we do not receive Christ by such a Faith, as I described above, we offer him a most insolent Affront, by pretending to put our unsanctified and rebellious Hearts under his Patronage.

We see then, that without this Faith we cannot possibly be saved. It is the Counter-part of this important Truth, which we now add, when we observe,

2. THAT " every one who hath this Faith, shall undoubtedly be saved."

You will here be sure to observe, that I say, " Every one who hath this Faith," meaning the Faith described above ; which includes in it our devoting ourselves to Christ in the Way of Holy Obedience, as an essential

tial Part of it : And consequently there can be no Reason to say, as some have ~~w. l.~~ represented the Matter, " A Believer shall be saved, let him live as he will ; " which is either a most notorious and mischievous *Falsehood*, or an express *Contradiction in Terms*. If the Word *Believer* be supposed to signify one, who merely assents to the *Truth* of the *Gospel* in *Speculation*, nothing can be more *false* ; and this whole *Epistle of James*, to omit ~~a~~ Thousand particular Passages of other *Scriptures*, is a Demonstration of the contrary : But if it be meant, as I suppose it generally is, of a *true Believer*, it is an express *Contradiction* ; and is as *absurd*, as it would be to say, a really *Good Man* shall be *saved*, tho' he should at the same Time be a very *Bad one*. For no one can, in the *Sense* described above, which is the *Scriptural Sense*, be a *true Believer*, but one who *wills to live* in a *holy Manner* ; since the same *Operation* of *God* upon the Soul, which disposes it to *believe*, sanctifies the *Will*, and tho' freely, yet effectually leads it, into a prevailing *Determination* to make the *Service of God* the *Business of Life* : Or, in other Words, it is plain from the whole Tenor of *Scripture*, that a *Saving* is also a *Sanctifying Faith* ; but there cannot be a *Sanctifying Faith* in an *unholy Heart* ; neither can there be a *holy*

know the Heart, where there is a wicked Life; for the Tree is known by its Fruits<sup>b</sup>: And when we speak of the Heart, we mean not merely the Affections, but the Will, the Determinations of which are indeed the very Actions of which we speak, so far as they are properly ours. There cannot therefore be a more insolent Falsehood, than the Pretence to Holiness of Heart, where that of the Life is wanting, or to Saving Faith in the Absence of both. There may indeed be an Error in the Understanding as to some Precepts of Christ, or a false Judgment as to some Circumstance attending ourselves; and that may produce some Error in Practice: There may be Instances, in which the Infirmity of Human Nature, and the Surprize or Force of a Temptation, may betray a Man into particular Miscarriages, contrary to the general Bent and Tenor of his Heart and Life: But there cannot possibly be, in the Conduct of any true Believer, an habitual, allowed, and customary Disobedience to any one Commandment of our blessed Redeemer.

THIS you must first admit as a necessary Preliminary; and when it is admitted, you may very securely build upon it this great Truth, that " whosoever hath such a Faith as this, shall certainly be saved." Whatever ~~his former~~ Guilt may have been, tho' ever so various, ever so long continued, ever so

<sup>b</sup> Luke vi. 44.

so aggravated ; tho' *Crimes* had been committed, ~~from which he could never have been justified by the Law of Moses~~<sup>i</sup>, but would have been doomed by it to an infamous *Death without Mercy*<sup>k</sup> : Yet on exerting such an Act of *Faith in Christ*, the *Believer* immediately stands *a justified Person before G O D*, previous to any *Good Works* of his own : Yea, tho' he should die, 'before he have an Opportunity of performing any, in this *Craft*', (which, if ever it happen, is by the Way, the *only Case*, in which *Good Works* are not, according to the *Gospel-Covenant*, necessary to an actual Admission into *Heaven*,) an *Omniscient GOD calls the Things that are not as if they were*<sup>l</sup>, and accepts those *Fruits of Holiness* which he discerned in their *Root*, or their *Bud*, tho' he did not afford Time for their coming to *Maturity*. And if *Life* be spared, the *Believer* continuing such, continues in a State of *Favour* and *Acceptance* with *God*, tho' there may be remaining Imperfections in him ; and tho' he may see Reason to complain, that he *cannot do the Things which he would*, but that the *Law in his Members* struggles against the *Law of his Mind*<sup>m</sup>, yet he shall finally be saved ; whatever Difficulties are to be broken through, and how long soever his Trials may continue : And his *Salvation*

<sup>i</sup> Acts xiii. 39.      <sup>k</sup> Heb. x. 28.

<sup>l</sup> Rom. iv.

<sup>m</sup> Rom. vii. 23.

~~Sheep~~ I. shall certainly be saved. 13

~~known~~ as a Believer is as certain, from the  
Current of the Word of GOD, as the  
~~Condemnation~~ of the Unbeliever, which we  
spoke above. *He that believeth on the Son  
of GOD, bath Everlasting Life<sup>n</sup>; he hath it al-  
ready in its Beginnings and Earneſts, and he  
shall e'er long rise to the compleat Possession of  
it.* For Christ gives unto his Sheep Eternal Life,  
and they shall never perish, neither shall any  
pluck them out of his Hand<sup>o</sup>. But it is of  
Importance that I add,

• 3. THAT • "after all a Believer is not to  
" ascribe his Salvation to the Merit and  
" Excellency of this Faith itself, but  
" entirely to the Merit and Righteous-  
" ness of the Lord Jesus Christ, and  
" the Free Grace of GOD, as mani-  
" fested in it."

WE know, it is the constant Doctrine of  
the New Testament, that GOD hath made  
us accepted in the Beloved<sup>p</sup>; and that of  
Him we are in Christ Jesus, who of GOD is  
made unto us Wisdom, and Righteousness, and  
Sanctification, and Redemption<sup>q</sup>: So that we  
are justified freely by his Grace, thro' the Re-  
demption that is in him<sup>r</sup>. And if we should  
pretend to say, that we are accepted of God  
for Faith, as the meritorious Cause of that

Accept-

<sup>n</sup> John iii. 36.

<sup>o</sup> John x. 28.

<sup>p</sup> Eph. i. 6.

<sup>q</sup> 1 Cor. i. 30.

<sup>r</sup> Rom. iii. 24.

14 *Salvation must not be ascrib'd* ~~every~~  
*Acceptance, we must contradict the whole*  
*Course of the Apostle Paul's Argument, espe-*  
*cially in the fourth Chapter of his Epistle to*  
*the Romans, where he strongly contends* ~~that~~  
*Abraham was not justified by Works, because*  
*if he were, he would have something to glory*  
*in before GOD* <sup>1</sup>. Now if he had been justi-  
fied by Faith, as his own meritorious *Act*,  
there would have been as much Roora for  
him to have gloried in that, as in ~~any~~ Work,  
whether of Ceremonial, or Moral Obedience.—  
And in the same Epistle he declares again,  
where he is speaking of the Salvation of  
God's chosen Remnant, that *if it be of*  
*Works, then it is no more Grace; otherwise*  
*Work is no more Work* <sup>2</sup>: The Meaning  
of which plainly is, that no Man can at once  
be justified by Grace, and by Works: And on  
the same Principles we may also say, no Man  
can be justified by the Merit of Faith, and yet  
by Grace. If therefore it evidently appear from  
the Text, and our farther Reasonings upon  
it, that our Justification and Acceptance  
with God is to be ascribed to Grace, all Pre-  
tence of Merit in the *Act of believing* must  
of Course be given up.

This will indeed farther appear, if we  
consider, what it is that Faith does in or-  
der to our being justified. You ~~very well~~  
know,

<sup>1</sup> Rom. iv. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Rom. xi. 6.

know it is represented in Scripture, as receiving Christ. To as many as received him, to them gave he Power, (or Privilege,) to become the Sons of GOD, even to them that believe on his Name<sup>w</sup>. Now it must be flagrantly absurd, to talk of resting upon an Act, whereby we do indeed receive and rest upon another. And therefore however inaccurately some may have expressed themselves on this Head, I cannot suppose, that any wise and considerate Christian ever meant to assert the contrary to what I am now endeavouring to prove. We do indeed find the Apostle speaking of *Faith*, as imputed for Righteousness<sup>w</sup>; but it seems to me, that the most natural Sense of that Expression may be fixed, and the Propriety of it may be admitted, upon the Principles I have now been laying down.

ALL Manner of *Imputation* seems to be a Metaphor taken from Books of Account between Creditor and Debtor \*. To impute any *Act* of Sin, or of Obedience, is therefore properly no other than to set it down to his Account. The great G O D of Heaven and Earth is represented in Scripture, with humble

<sup>u</sup> John i. 12.    <sup>w</sup> Rom. iv. 22.

\* From Mercantile Affairs the Metaphor is sometimes applied to Judicial; as Crimes to be accounted for are also sometimes called Debts: But when the Matter is well understood in one View, it is easy to apply it to the others.

humble Condescension, to our Manner of acting and conceiving of Things, as keeping a most exact *Book of Records and Accounts*, in which those Things are registered concerning every one of us, which he will bring into that final Review and Survey, by which our Characters and States shall finally be determined. And as the most exact and perfect Obedience is a Debt which we owe him, as our great Creator, Benefactor, and Governour; so on the Breach of his Law, we owe him some proper Satisfaction for it. In this View, we are all charged as *Debtors*, poor miserable insolvent *Debtors*, in the *Book of God*: Innumerable Sins are imputed, or set down to our Account: And were Things to go on in this Course, we should e'er long be arrested by the Divine Justice, and being found incapable of Payment, should be cast into the Prison of Hell, to come out no more. But GOD, in Pity to this our calamitous State, has found out a Surety and a Ransom for us, and has provided a Satisfaction in the Obedience and Sufferings of his Son; which is what we mean by the Righteousness of Christ, or his Active and Passive Obedience. It is with a gracious Regard to this, to express his high Complacency in it, and (if I may so speak,) his pleasing Remembrance of it, that all who are finally justified and saved, meet with Divine Acceptance

*Acceptance and Favour:* Or to pursue the *Metaphor* open'd above, the Righteousness of Christ is in the Book of GOD imputed, or *set down to their Account*, as that by which *The Debt is ballanced*, and they are entitled to such Favours as Righteous Persons might expect from GOD. But then, it is an inviolable Rule in the Divine Proceedings, that this Righteousness, or *this Atonement and Satisfaction of Christ*, (for I think, it matters but little, by which of these Names it shall be called,) be a Means of *delivering those*, and *only those*, that believe. Pursuant therefore to the aforesaid *Metaphor*, when any particular Person *believes*, this is *set down to his Account*, as a most important Article, or as a *Memorandum* (if I may so express it,) *in the Book of GOD's Remembrance*, that such a one is now actually become a Believer, and therefore is now intitled to *Justification and Life by Christ*. In this Sense his Faith is *imputed for Righteousness*. Yet it is not regarded by GOD, as the grand *Consideration* which *ballances the Account*, or indeed as *paying any of the former Debt*, which it is impossible it should; but only as *that*, which according to the gracious *Constitution* of the *Gospel* gives a Man a *Claim to that* which *Christ has paid*, and which *GOD* has graciously *allowed*, as a *valuable Consideration*, in *Regard to which he may honourably par-*

18 *Being thus sav'd thro' Faith,* SER. I.  
don and accept all who shall apply to him in  
his appointed Way, or in the Way of humble  
believing, as Faith was described above.

THIS appears to me a just and easy View of the *Gospel-Doctrine* on this Head ; and it is so important distinctly to understand it, that I hope you will excuse my having represented it in so many Words. And this is, on the whole, the Sense in which we may be said, to be *saved through Faith*. — None can be *saved without it* ; — and every one who has it, is *intitled to Salvation* ; — but not in Virtue of the Merit and Excellency of Faith it self, but entirely for the Sake of what Christ has done and suffered ; or in other Words, by the *Imputation of his perfect Righteousness*, the Merit of which is graciously applied to this or that particular Person upon his Believing : So that upon this he is *justified* ; and by the general Tenor of the *Gospel* is to be look'd on as a *Righteous Person* ; or as one, who shall on the whole be *treated as such*, and shall e'er long be publickly declared *Righteous* before the assembled World, and be freed from all the *Remainders of that Penalty* which Sin has brought upon us : And tho' for wise and good Reasons, he be for a while continued under some of them, the Time of that Continuance is so short, and his succeeding *Happiness* so lasting, that the former

SER. I. *We are saved by Grace.* 19  
former being as it were swallowed up by the latter in the all-comprehending Views of God, he is spoken of by him, as if his *Justification and Salvation* were already complete. *Ye are saved through Faith.* — But having stated this, the Method I proposed leads me,

II. To shew, that in Consequence of our being thus *saved through Faith*, we may properly be said to be *saved by Grace*.

Now the *Connection between these* will appear very evident; if we consider, — that *Faith* cannot make any *Atonement* to the offended Justice of *God*, so as to give us any *Legal Claim* even to the *Pardon of our Sins* upon the Account of it: — Much less can it confer any *Obligation upon GOD* to bestow on us *Eternal Blessedness*: — Nor would there indeed have been any *Room to mention Faith* in this whole Affair, if *GOD* had not contriv'd such a *Method of Salvation*, and done that to effect it, which none but himself could have done.

1. “ *FAITH* cannot make any *Atonement* to the offended Justice of *God*,  
“ so as to give us any *Legal Claim*  
“ even to the *Pardon of our Sins* upon  
“ the Account of it;” so that if we

20     *Faith can make no Atonement*    SER. I.  
are saved through Faith, we must in this  
View acknowledge it to be by Grace.

THE Law of so wise, so great, and so venerable a Sovereign, as the Blessed GOD is, must of Course suppose some awful Sanctions, some solemn Denunciations of Wrath and Vengeance on those who presumptuously transgress it. And it is certainly the Part of GOD, as a wise, holy, and gracious Legislator, to maintain its Honour when it has been violated, and not to treat an offending Creature, as innocent and righteous, without some Provision made for the Satisfaction of his injured Justice: In the Demand of which Satisfaction, GOD does not express any Thing of a sanguinary and revengeful Disposition: Far be so blasphemous a Thought from us! But he displays a steady Regard to that Order, which as the Great Sovereign it becomes him, for the Benefit of his Subjects, as well as for the Glory of his own Name and Government, to preserve in the Moral World, i. e. among his reasonable Creatures. Some ample and honourable Amends must therefore be made, in Order to the Discharge of a Guilty and Condemned Criminal. And is Faith such an Amends? Take it in its utmost Extent, as an Assent to whatever he proposes, and a Submission to whatever he demands, to the very utmost of our capacity;

SER. I. to GOD's offended Justice. 21  
city, this in our present Circumstances is  
but our Duty, and would have been so had  
we never offended him: And the Perform-  
ance of it, with whatever Readiness, Ex-  
actness, and Constancy, cannot possibly atone  
for the Violation of it in Times past; as the  
Payment of what for the future becomes due  
to any Creditor, cannot discharge a Debt  
formerly contracted, and remaining unbal-  
anced upon Account. Therefore it is, that  
we read of Christ's being made a Sin-Offering  
for us, tho' he himself knew no Sin, that  
we might be made the Righteousness of GOD  
in him<sup>x</sup>; i. e. that we might be accepted of  
God as righteous, being considered as by  
Faith united to him, and interested in his  
Righteousness and Grace. In Testimony of  
which, God expressly requires, that every  
Sinner should sue out his Pardon in Christ's  
Name<sup>y</sup>, and should present himself before  
him as one that has obtained Redemption thro'  
Christ's Blood, and is accepted in the Beloved<sup>z</sup>,  
who of GOD is made unto us Righteousness<sup>a</sup>:  
A Scheme utterly inconsistent with that of  
our being justified and saved by any Merit  
or Excellence in Faith, considered as an Act  
of Atonement made by us, by which the Guilt  
of our Offences is cancell'd, and our Pardon  
bought by us. It is yet more apparent,

C 3

2. THAT

<sup>x</sup> 2 Cor. v. 21. <sup>y</sup> Luke xxiv. 47. <sup>z</sup> Ephes. 6, 7. <sup>a</sup> 1 Cor. i, 30.

2. THAT “*Faith* can confer no Obligation upon GOD to bestow on us “*Eternal Blessedness*;” in which View also our *Salvation* thro’ it must appear to be by *Grace*.

THAT *Eternal Blessedness* is designed for every *believing Soul*, is, through the Divine Goodness, as apparent, as that *Faith* itself is ever required in Scripture. But can we say of *Eternal Life*, that it is the *Wages* of *Faith*? I much question, whether it could have been *claimed* as *Wages* due to us on Account of our *Obedience*, had that *Obedience* been *perfect* in its Kind and Degree. Nor do I think, it could with any Confidence have been *expected*, unless GOD had been pleased by a gracious *Covenant* to *promise* it: Otherwise, all that the *compleatest Obedience* could have *claimed*, would only have been *Favour continued*, or at most *Favour increasing*, during the Time in which we continued to *behave ourselves well*. Much less then can we imagine, that when we had once *broken the Law of GOD*, *Faith*, tho’ for the Future attended with the most *perfect Efficacy*, and productive of the most *steady Course of Obedience* in all After-Instances, could give us any such *Claim*. Least of all then, can we have any Room to pretend it, on Account of a *Faith*,

a *Faith*, which operates in so *imperfect* a Manner, and produces an *Holiness* so sadly ~~defective~~ in many Instances, as we must acknowledge our own to be. That we should be admitted into the glorious Presence of GOD, and be fixed in a State of immutable Security and Felicity, where Sin and Sorrow shall no more invade us, but where *GOD will appoint* for us *Salvation* itself for *Walls and Bulwarks*<sup>b</sup>, is so glorious a Triumph of the Divine Goodness; that the Soul which ~~knows~~ itself, and attentively looks on this ~~far more exceeding and eternal Weight of Glory~~, is astonished and humbled in the Views of it, and finds it no small Stretch of *Faith*, to be able to *believe*, that GOD does indeed *intend it* for so sinful a Creature: So far is the *Believer* from arrogating any Thing of this Kind to himself, as if *his own Faith* had any Degree of *Merit* or *Excellence* proportionable to it. But we must observe once more, to compleat the Argument,

THAT “ there had been *no Room to mention Faith* at all in this Affair, “ *had not GOD graciously contriv'd such a Method of Salvation*, and *done that to effect it*, which none but *himself could do.*”

*F A I T H receives our Lord Jesus Christ ; 'tis its great Office, and its great Glory to do it. But how could it have received him, unless he had been given ? and how could he have been given in this View, but by the Appointment of the Father, in Concurrence with his own free, and most gracious Consent ?—Faith apprehends and submits to the Gospel-Plan of Salvation by the Obedience and Sufferings of the Son of GOD ; yea, it not only submits to it, but rejoices and glories in it. But who could have exhibited, who could have contrived, who could have executed such a Plan, unless it had been formed and determined in the Counsels of Eternal Love ?—Admit Faith to be ever so voluntary, and so far as is possible to a Creature, ever so independent an Act, can we any of us say, that there was so much Merit and Excellency in that Act, or in any of its subsequent Fruits, that GOD upon the Fore-sight of it should say, “ These Creatures, guilty and condemned as they appear, will be so ready to receive the Intimations of my Will, that they will fully deserve, that I should save them at any Rate ; they will deserve, even that my Son should become Incarnate, and die as a Sacrifice, to make Way for their Happiness.” Can any of you, Sirs, imagine this to have been the Case ? Or can you hear*

SE R. I. had not GOD found a Way to save us. 25  
hear it even supposed, without finding something shocking in the very Representation of it? The blessed Paul, I am sure, had very different Views, when he said, *G O D hath predestinated us to the Adoption of Children by Jesus Christ unto himself, according to the good Pleasure of his Will, to the Praise of the Glory of his Grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved*<sup>c</sup>. And the Apostle John had other Notions of it, when he said, full as his gracious Heart was of the most lively Sentiments of Gratitude and Zeal, *Herein is Love, not that we loved G O D, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the Propitiation for our Sins*<sup>d</sup>.

THESE Arguments would prove, that our *Salvation through Faith* is by *Grace*, even tho' it could not be added, that *this Faith is the Gift of GOD*: How much more convincing then must the *Conclusion* be, when *that Consideration* is added to the rest?

BUT as the Illustration of *this*, which was the *Third General* we mentioned, will require more Time, than can properly be allowed to the Remainder of *this Discourse*, I will reserve it to *another*; and conclude for the present, with *exhorting you seriously to examine, whether you have this Principle of Faith in yoar Hearts, without which your Salvation*

• c Eph. i. 5, 6.      d 1 John iv. 10.

*Salvation is in present Circumstances an impossible Thing, and with which it is inviolably secure.*

IT is a melancholy, but most obvious Truth, that *all Men have not Faith*. There are Thousands and Ten Thousands, under the Gospel, with regard to whom its *Ministers* have Reason to complain, *Who hath believed our Report, and to whom hath the Arm of the Lord been revealed?*<sup>f</sup> On whom has its Power been so exerted, as to *conquer* the Natural Incredulity and Obstinacy of their *Hearts*? Are you, Sirs, of *that Number*, or of the Number of those, who, as the Scripture expresses it, *have believed through Grace*?<sup>e</sup> 'Tis the *Question*, on which your *Eternal State* will turn at last, and therefore you would do well, to *examine* it now. And I would beseech you, to endeavour to trace it—in its *Production*,—and in its *Effects*;—or in other Words, to enquire,—how it has been *introduced* into your Minds,—and how it has *wrought* there.—You may surely discover it, in the *one*, or in the *other*, if it be your prevailing Character; and I hope, many of you will be able to discover it in *both*.

(1.) CAN you trace *Faith* “ in its *Production*, and *Advance* in your Souls?”

Do

<sup>e</sup> 2 Thess. iii. 2.   <sup>f</sup> Isa. liii. 1.   <sup>g</sup> Acts xviii. 27.

Do you recollect any Time, in which you had no Thoughts of the Lord Jesus Christ, and no Workings of Affection towards him? And has there been any Alteration in your Minds in this Respect? All true *Faith in Christ* is founded on a *Conviction of Sin*, and of the *Misery* to which you are exposed by it. Have you indeed been brought to this *Conviction*? Have you heard, and (if I may be allowed the Expression,) have you *felt yourselves condemned* by the Sentence of a ~~righteous~~, a holy, yea, of a merciful God? - And have you by that *Apprehension* been stirred up to cry for *Pardon* and *Deliverance*? You have heard of *Christ* under the Character of a *Saviour*: But I put it to your Consciences, Have you seriously viewed him under that *Character*? and from a full Persuasion of his *Correspondency*, when considered in this View, to all the *Necessities* of your Case, and all the *Exigencies* of your Souls, have you enter'd into any *Treaty with him*? Recollect it seriously. Have you ever presented yourselves before God, with an humble and cordial *Regard to Christ*? And do you know what it is, secretly and sincerely to *repose your Souls upon the Merit of his Obedience*, and the *Efficacy of his Blood*, with humble *Acknowledgement of your own Guilt*, with entire *Resignation of your own Righteousness*, as utterly *unworthy* of being mentioned before God,

28    *Can you trace the Effects of it*   S E R. I.

God, and with a cordial and joyful *Resolution* to *devote yourselves to his Service as long as you have any Being, and thro' Time and Eternity to testify your Gratitude by a constant Series of Obedience?*

If you can trace such a *Process of Thought* and *Experience* as this, you have great Reason to conclude, that you experimentally know what *Faith* is; and that through *Faith* you are in the Way to *Salvation*. Yet it is always to be remember'd, that *Faith* is to be shewn by its Works<sup>h</sup>; Give me Leave therefore farther to enquire,

(2.) WHETHER you can trace "the  
" genuine Effects of it in your Hearts  
" and Lives?"

You believe in Christ: But has that *Faith in him* produced a continued and habitual *Intercourse with him*? I speak not of an *Intercourse* absolutely uninterrupted; for that the present State of Human Life will not admit. But has it produced frequently repeated and direct *Acts of Application to him*, and *Converse with him*? One can hardly imagine, how it is possible for a true *Believer*, to suffer these to be long, and often intermittent; especially to such a Degree, that *Days*, and *Weeks*, and *Months* should pass, as if all the Business between Christ and his Soul were quite

<sup>h</sup> James ii. 18.

quite finished, and he and his Lord were parted by Consent, till Death, or some very urgent and extraordinary Circumstance, renew'd the Interviews between them,—I would ask farther, Has this Faith to which you pretend, produced a Resemblance to Christ's Example, and an Obedience to his Precepts, in the Course of your Lives? You know, that true Faith is operative; and you know, in the general, the Genius and Design of Christianity. I would demand of your Consciences, how far you comply with it? Is your Temper and Conduct in the main such, as you well know our Lord intended, that the Temper and Conduct of his People should be? Is it devout and spiritual, just and charitable, sober and temperate, humble and cautious? Is Religion your Care, and do you maintain an habitual Watchfulness over yourselves, that your Behaviour may be agreeable and honourable to your Profession?—Once more, Are you ardently pursuing greater Attainments in the Christian Temper and Life, so that you may be spoken of as *longing and thirsting after Righteousness*?<sup>1</sup>

If you can answer such Enquiries as these in the Affirmative, you have a great Deal of Reason to hope, that *Faith is yours*, and *Salvation is yours*. But if you cannot so answer them, a confident Assurance that you shall be

<sup>1</sup> Matth. v. 6.

30 *If Sin reigns, you have no Faith.* SER. I.  
be saved is so far from being *Faith*, that it is  
*Presumption* and *Folly*; and far from being  
any *Security* to you, will only prove *adding*  
*Sin to Sin*. That *Confidence*, by what ever  
Name you may affect to call it, is indeed,  
*Unbelief*: *Unbelief of GOD's Threatenings*,  
while it vainly pretends to *trust his Promises*:  
For he hath not more expressly said, that  
*he who believeth on the Son, hath Everlasting Life*; than he has added, that *he who is disobedient to the Son* \*, *shall not see Life* \*. While  
*Sin reigns in your Life*, and thereby appears  
to *reign in your Heart*, did you pretend  
*Revelation from Heaven* as to the *Truth of*  
*your Faith*, every wise Man would conclude  
that pretended *Revelation* was a *Delusion*;  
and that how solemnly soever it might be  
ascribed to the *Spirit of Truth and Holiness*,  
it really proceeded from the *Father of Lies*.

EXCUSE the *Plainness*, with which *Fidelity to GOD*, and *to you*, obliges me to speak  
on this Head; and be assured, that it proceeds from a real Concern to secure the  
Honour of *that glorious Doctrine of SALVATION BY GRACE*, which I have now  
been labouring to establish, and the *Demonstration* and *Improvement* of which I shall  
farther pursue in the *ensuing Discourse*.

\* ο απειλει των νησιων.

\* John iii. 36.



## S E R M O N II.

FAITH is the GIFT of GOD.

EPHES. ii. 8.

*For by Grace are ye saved, through Faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the Gift of GOD.*

IN the Works of *Nature*, many of those Things, which to a superficial Eye may appear as *Defects*, will on a careful Enquiry be found to be *Marks* of consummate *Wisdom*, and kind *Contrivance*. And on the same Principle, I confess, I have often thought, there is Reason to be thankful for the very *Inaccuracies* of *Scripture*. The *Haste* in which the Apostle *Paul* was by the Multiplicity of his Affairs obliged to write, has given us an Opportunity of viewing *more of his Heart* in his *Epistles*, than we might perhaps

32 It appears we are sav'd by Grace, SER. II.  
haps have seen, if he had frequently reviewed and corrected them; Those *Paraphrases*, in particular, and those *Repetitions*, which render the Style less elegant, and the Sense sometimes less conspicuous, do however-  
theless shew to greater Advantage, how deeply those Thoughts were impress'd upon his Mind, which he introduces in such a Manner. And of this, the Words which I have now been reading, are an Instance. In the Course of his preceding Argument, a few Verses before, while he is telling the Ephesians, that GOD who is rich in Mercy, <sup>for</sup> his great Love wherewith he loved them, even when they were dead in Sins, did quickened them together with Christ; he adds, by way of Parenthesis, By Grace ye are saved<sup>a</sup>: And when he goes on to say, they were raised up together, and made to sit together in Heavenly Places in Christ Jesus, he further tells them, that this was with an Intention that in the Ages to come God might shew the exceeding Riches of his Grace, in his Kindness towards us, through Christ Jesus<sup>b</sup>: Nay, his Heart was so full of the Subject of Grace, free and astonishing Grace, that as if all this was not enough, by a most glorious and edifying Tautology, (if I may be allowed so to speak,) he inserts the Words of my Text, By Grace are ye saved, through Faith;  
and

SER. II. *in that Faith is the Gift of GOD.* 33  
*and that not of yourselves; it is the Gift of*  
*by GOD.*

I HAVE already shewn you from these  
Words, *in what Sense* we may be said to be  
~~saved through~~ *Faith:*—And I have also prov'd,  
that in Consequence of this it is evident, we  
must be *saved by Grace*; since *Faith* being  
incapable of satisfying the Demands of GOD's  
injur'd *Justice*, can much less merit such a  
Recompence as *Eternal Life*; nor can it indeed  
have any *Efficacy*, or any *Place* at all  
in this Affair, otherwise than by GOD's free  
~~Confutation~~ and gracious *Appointment*.—I  
then concluded with observing, that this  
Argument would have a convincing Force,  
even tho' *Faith* were ever so entirely *an Act*  
*of our own*; or that we had no more Support  
or Assistance from GOD in forming, and ex-  
erting it, than we have in any of the Com-  
mon Actions of Natural Life. But I am  
now to shew, that even *this* is not the Case;  
but, that a *new Proof* of our being *saved*  
~~by Grace~~ arises from considering,

III. THE Argument which the *Apostle*  
suggests in the Close of the *Text*, *that*  
*even this Faith is not of ourselves; but*  
*it is the Gift of GOD.*

I AM sensible that some endeavour to in-  
validate and supersede all this Part of the  
Argument, by giving *another Turn* to this  
D last

last Clause, referring it in general to our Salvation by Faith, as if it had been said,

" Our being thus saved by Grace through

" Faith, (as I have just now said,) is not

" of ourselves, but it is the Gift of GOD."

But I apprehend, that an impartial Reader would not be willing to allow of this Interpretation; which makes the latter Clause a mere Repetition of what was said before, and a Repetition of it in less proper and expressive Words. None could imagine, that our being saved through Faith was of ourselves; or that we ever could. ~~ourselves~~ constitute and appoint such a Way of Salvation, which was indeed fixed so long before we had a Being. But Faith being really our own Act, it was highly pertinent to observe, that the Excellency of this Act is not to be arrogated to ourselves, but is to be ascrib'd to GOD. All that are acquainted with the Genius of the Original must acknowledge, this is a Construction which it will very fairly admit. And we shall prove in the Proces of this Argument, that other Scriptures expressly declare the Truth, which this Interpretation makes to be the Meaning of the Words.

FAITH may be called the *Gift of GOD*,—as it is GOD, that reveals the great Objects of Faith,—that brings the Mind to attend to them,—that conquers our Natural

*Aversion*

SER. II. as he reveals the Objects of it. 35

Conversion to the Gospel-Method of Salvation, so implants Faith in the Soul;— and also as it is he, that carries it on to more perfect Degrees, and improves its Vigour and Activity.

I. *FAITH* may be called *the Gift of GOD*, “as it is GOD, who reveals “the great Objects of Faith.”

HUMAN Reason is but weak and imperfect, and has indeed interwoven the Traces of its own *Weakness*, with many of the fairest Monuments of its *Strength*. Even in its most advanced State, among the most learned and polite *Nations* of Antiquity, it is deplorably evident, how far it was from discovering the several Branches of *Natural Religion* in its Purity, Extent, and Order. And to speak freely, it shone more brightly in almost every other View, than in that which is its noblest End; I mean, what relates to *GOD*, and *Immortality*. It has indeed produced many admirable *Poems*, and composed many moving *Orations*: It has woven many exquisite *Threads of Argument*, with which the subtlest Disputants have intangled each other, and have often intangled themselves: And much more useful it has been, in adorning the Face of the *Earth*, in subduing the *Sea*, in managing the *Winds*, and

36 *Natural Reason could not have SER.* <sup>11</sup>  
meting out the *Heavens*. But this rich *Vein*  
of *Knowledge*, this *Mine* of holy and *Divine*  
*Treasure*, lies too deep for *Human* *Discovery*.—If any ask, *Where shall this Wisdom*  
*be found, and where is the Place of this Understanding*? It must be granted, that it is  
a *Path*, which the *Vulture's Eye* bath not  
seen<sup>d</sup>: *Man knoweth not the Price thereof*,  
*neither is it found in the Land of the Living*.  
*The Depth of Human Science says, It is not*  
*in me: And the Sea, with all the most im-*  
*prov'd Countries that lie upon it, must say,*  
*It is not with me<sup>e</sup>: For Eye bath not seen,*  
*nor Ear heard neither have enter'd into the*  
*Heart of Man, the Things wh<sup>c</sup>b GOD bath*  
*prepared for them that lovet him<sup>f</sup>*. There  
were no *Principles* on which to proceed, in  
the *Investigation* of this important *Know-*  
*ledge*: None could ever have learn'd, *that*  
*GOD had form'd Counsels of Mercy and Peace*  
towards *Apostate Creatures*: None could  
ever on *Natural Principles* have discovered  
the very *Existence* of the *Son*, and the *Spirit*.  
How much less then could they have known,  
or imagined, that the *Son of GOD* should  
have undertaken to *redeem us* with his own  
precious *Blood*; and the *Spirit* be sent to  
manage Affairs, as the great Agent of the *Re-*  
*deemer's Kingdom*; in Consequence of whose  
“  
gracious

<sup>c</sup> Job ~~viii.~~ <sup>f</sup> iii. 12.  
I Cor. viii. 9.

gracious Acts and Influences the Soul should be savingly renewed and transformed; and then carried on with a growing Pace in the Way to Heaven, till it was received to the ETERNAL State of holy and triumphant Spirits at Death, and to compleat Glory at the Resurrection of the Dead. All the Men upon Earth could never by their own Natural Sagacity have discover'd any of these Particulars; how much less then could the whole System have been discovered?— But GOD himself has graciously revealed them by his Spirit: And as he was pleased miraculously to interpose to give this Revelation to the World; so he has interposed by remarkable Providences to send us such clear Notices of it; and to send these Notices so early too, as to throw the Prejudice of Education among us this Way, rather than the contrary. And considering how powerful those Prejudices are, and how many have fallen into Ruin by them, this will appear no small Matter to a considerate Person: Especially when he surveys the State of the World in General, and considers how few Nations and Countries there are, in which this is the Case; and in what various Forms of most pernicious and destructive Errors the Generality of Mankind are trained up from their tenderest Infancy.— I would conclude this Head with observing,

D 3

that

that "whatever particular Advantages we have enjoyed, they are all to be traced up to the distinguishing Goodness of GOD to us." If wise and pious ~~Parents~~, if skillful, zealous, and faithful Ministers, have been the Instruments of working Faith in our Souls, this also cometh forth from the Lord of Hosts<sup>h</sup>; who taught their Minds to conceive, and their Lips to speak, and who open'd our Hearts to receive Instruction. And this leads me to add,

2. THAT as GOD reveals the great Objects of Faith, so it is He also, that inclines the Mind to attend to them; on which Account Faith may be further said to be the Gift of GOD.

THE great Objects of Faith are, ~~and~~ by their Nature must be, to us Invisible; while those of Sense strike so strongly on the Mind, that it is no Wonder, we are apt oft'n to forget the other. And when a Man is ~~con-~~ conscious to himself, that the first Recollection and Acquaintance with them must be painful, and must be attended with Remorse and Fear, how necessary soever that Pain may be, it is too natural to draw back from it. And we may easily conceive that Satan, the great Enemy of Mens' Eternal Happiness,

ness, will exert all his Artifices, to *prejudice* them against it, and to *divert* them from it.

ACCORDINGLY I make no Doubt, but that many of you, and especially *Young Persons*, have experienced this. You have found, that when you first began to be sensible you were in a *lost* and miserable *State*; when you began first to hearken to the Tidings of *Deliverance by Christ*, and to enquire into the *Way of Salvation* exhibited in the *Gospel*; many Circumstances arose to *take off* your *Attention* from them. You found *Satan* endeavouring to *steal away* the Good Seed *out of your Hearts*, lest you should believe and be ~~favoured~~, and joining the Efforts of various of his Instruments, to *allure*, or to *terrify* you from *Religion*. To what then will you *ascribe* it, ~~that~~ you have been able to *break through* all these *Snares*? To what will you *ascribe* it, that when you had perhaps laboured to *stifle* *Consciencies* in your own Hearts, they have *on you* with greater Power than before? and though you have endeavoured all you could to *shift them off*, yet you have *found them* every where *pursuing you*; keeping your Eyes from Sleep during the *Watches of the Night*, or breaking in upon you in the *Morning* with the returning Light; or

40 *He conquers our Natural Aversion* SER. II.  
following you perhaps, into those Scenes of  
Business, or of vain Conversation, to which  
you have fled as a Refuge from them? You  
must undoubtedly *ascribe it* to the *GOD of*  
*the Spirits of all Flesh*, that you have thus  
been taught to *consider your Ways*<sup>k</sup>; and that  
*your Spirits* have been so deeply *impress'd* with  
*Concerns*, which Multitudes whom the World  
reckons among the *wisest* of Mankind, are  
entirely thoughtless about, and which per-  
haps you yourselves were once among the  
first to despise.

3. *FAITH* may be further called *the Gift of GOD*, as “ it is He that con-  
“ quers the *Natural Aversion*, which  
“ there is in Mens Hearts to the *Gof-  
“ pel-Method of Salvation*, when it  
“ comes to be understood and appre-  
“ hended.”

THAT *Method* is so wise, so rational, and  
so gracious, that one would imagine, even a  
Reasonable Creature should embrace it with  
Delight. Yet the degenerate Heart of Man  
draws its strongest *Objections* against it, from  
those Things which are really its greatest  
Glory.

It is the *Way of Humility*, and of *Holi-  
ness*: And a haughty and licentious Heart,

<sup>k</sup> Hag. i. 5.

SER. II. to the Gospel-Way of Salvation. 41  
rises against it, in each of these Views. To be strip'd of all the *Pride* of Human Nature, to stand *guilty* and *helpless* before God, and in an entire Renunciation of all *Self-Dependence*, to seek *Righteousness* and *Strength* in another, is, to Spirits naturally so *arrogant* as ours, a *hard Saying* scarcely to be borne: To give up our own *Wills* to be check'd and controlled in all *Things* by the Divine Authority, to engage in an habitual Course of *Self-Denial*, to crucify the *Flesh* with its *Affections and Lufts*<sup>1</sup>, is *hard* indeed. No Wonder therefore, if we are taught in Scripture to acknowledge the *Agency* and *Interposition* of a *Divine Hand*, when this is wrought in us; when we not only feel some *Tendency* of Soul towards it, some transient and ineffectual *Purpose*, but when a *permanent Principle* of this Kind is implanted in our *Hearts*, so that our Lives are governed by it. Hence the *Scripture* speaks of those, to whom it is given, not merely to hear of *Christ*, but to believe in him<sup>m</sup>; and pathetically describes the exceeding Greatness of his Power to us-ward who believe, as an Energy of mighty Power, like that which wrought in Christ when GOD raised him from the Dead<sup>n</sup>: When he lay a cold Corpse in the Grave, his Blood drain'd out, and his Side pierced to the very Heart, think of that mighty

42      *He carries on the Work, and S E R. II.*  
mighty Energy which then reanimated your Lord; and you see an Emblem of that, which raises us to a Divine Life, and enables us to act that Life, in Faith on a crucified and arisen Redeemer. Thus, as it is said in one Place, that *GOD gave to the Gentiles Repentance unto Life*<sup>o</sup>; it is also said in another, that *he purified their Hearts by Faith*<sup>p</sup>; plainly implying, that there is in both *an Interposition of Divine Power*. Now certainly, if he implants this Principle in our Hearts, that *Salvation* which he has connected with it must be entirely of *Grace*: Which will further appear, if we consider,

4. THAT “ it is *GOD*, who ~~carries on~~ —  
“ this blessed Work, and *maintains* this  
“ *Divine Principle* .”

IT is through much *Tribulation* and Danger, thro' much Opposition and Difficulty, that the *Christian* must enter into the Kingdom of *GOD*<sup>q</sup>. When he begins to set ~~out~~<sup>abed</sup> Heaven-ward, the *Prince of the Power of the Air* endeavours to raise those *Storms*, which shall, if possible, oblige him to make *Shipwreck of Faith, and of a good Conscience*<sup>r</sup>: Nevertheless he must endure to the End, or he cannot be saved<sup>s</sup>. And how is he

<sup>o</sup> Acts xi. 19.

<sup>p</sup> Acts xv. 9.

<sup>q</sup> Acts xiv. 21.

<sup>r</sup> 1 Tim. i. 19.

<sup>s</sup> Matt. xxiv. 13.

SER. II. maintains Faith in the Soul. 43  
abled thus to persevere? Surely it is through the continued Communications of Divine Grace to him; or as the Apostle with admirable Propriety expresses it, He obtains Mercy of the Lord to be faithful<sup>t</sup>. 'Tis by this Means that he obtains the Victor<sup>j</sup>: And while he overcomes the World, and conquers the remaining Corruptions of his Heart, he must still humbly own, that in the one, and the other Instance, he is more than a Conquerour through him that loved him<sup>u</sup>. In short, he will be ready to acknowledge, that having obtained Help of GOD, he continues to this Day<sup>w</sup>, and will mark out, as it were, the several Stages of his Journey, by erecting at the End of each Stone of Remembrance and Thankfulness, and saying, Hitherto the Lord has helped me.

AND now, my Friends, you may see the Evidence of this great Truth, that by Grace we are saved through Faith, appearing in its compleat Light: And permit me once more to repeat the Summary of the whole Argument, that it may be more deeply, and more distinctly, impress'd upon your Minds.— How much soever Faith may be supposed to be our own unassisted Act, so far as the Act of any Creature is unassisted, it could make

<sup>i</sup> Cor. vii. 25.      <sup>u</sup> Rom. viii. 37.  
<sup>j</sup> vi. 22.      <sup>v</sup> Sam. vii. 12.

<sup>w</sup> Acts

44     *If we are sav'd thro' Faith, SER. II.*  
make no Atonement to the injured Justice of  
GOD,—and much less confer ~~any~~ Obligation  
upon him to bestow on us *Eternal Life* ;—nor  
had there been *any Room* to mention it at all in  
the whole Affair, if GOD had not contriv'd  
such a *Method of Salvation*, and *done that to*  
*effect it* which none but himself could  
do :— Much more will it appear to be *of*  
*Grace*, when we add, that *Faith* itself *is*  
*the Gift of GOD*,—as he *reveals* the great  
*Objects* of it ;— as he *brings the Mind* to  
*attend* to them ;—as he *conquers the Natural*,  
*Aversion* of the Heart to the *Gospel-Method*  
*of Salvation* ;— and *carries on the Work* of  
*Faith* in the Soul, till it ends in *complete*  
*Salvation*. It now remains,

IV. THAT I conclyde with some ob-  
vious, but useful, *Inferences from the*  
*whole.*

AND here now, if it is *by Grace*, than  
*we are saved through Faith*, then certainly  
we may infer from hence,—that we *have*  
*no Reason to glory*,—but should be *thankful*  
for the *Grace by which we are saved*;—that  
we must wholly be *without Excuse*, if we  
*neglect this Method of Salvation*;— that we  
should labour therefore, that our *Faith* may  
be *increased and strengthen'd*;— that even  
the *weakest have Encouragement to seek*, and

SER. II. *we have no Reason to glory.* 45  
to hope for Salvation in this Way ; — and finally, that we should take great Heed, that we do not bring a Reproach upon this Doctrine by an irregular and licentious Behaviour.

— 1. If we are sav'd by Grace through Faith, then it is certain, that “ we have no Reason to glory.”

If it were possible, a Person should perform the most compleat and perfect Obedience, and so were justified by Works, it is but ~~only~~ in a limited Sense he would have ~~any~~ Thing of which to glory before GOD; since even he must acknowledge, that it is GOD who works in him, both to will, and to do<sup>r</sup>, and by his gracious Influences renders him capable of both : However he, in such a Case, may in some Measure glory, that he has done his best, and ~~that~~ his Behaviour has all that Merit, or all ~~that~~ Excellence, which the Behaviour of a Creature in his Circumstances could possibly have. But when the Ungodly are justified<sup>z</sup>, when we who have been Transgressors in Ten Thousand aggravated Instances are saved by Grace through Faith, of what shall we glory? Shall any of us glory, that we are saved by another, when even our receiving

46      *We should bless GOD for*    SER. II.  
*ing that other* is what *GOD* hath brought us  
to by the renewing and sanctifying Influences  
of his *Grace* upon our Hearts ? When we  
had corrupted and undone ourselves, and  
were under a Sentence of Condemnation and  
Wrath, we have *embraced the Gospel*, that is,  
we have accepted the Riches of the Divine  
Liberality and Goodness exhibited in it :  
But shall a *Beggar glory*, in having stretched  
out his Hand to receive an *Alms* ? especially  
if it were given him by a generous and skill-  
ful *Physician*, who before he bestowed that  
*Alms*, had cured him of a Disease, by which  
that very Hand, now stretched out to him,  
had been benumb'd and disabled ? Let us  
rather enter into that just and amiable Rea-  
soning of the Apostle *Paul*, and say as he  
does, *Of him, i. e. of GOD, are we in Christ*  
*Jesus, who of GOD is made unto us Wisdom,*  
*and Righteousness, and Sanctification, and*  
*Redemption : Let no man therefore glory in*  
*his Presence ; but he that glories, let him glory in the Lord*<sup>a</sup>. And this leads me to the next

2. THAT we have a great deal of Reason  
to " be thankful, and to adore the  
" Grace by which we are saved "

If it is *GOD* who commanded the *Light*  
to shine out of *Darkness*, that has shined in  
our

SER. II. the Grace by which we are saved. 47  
our Hearts, to give us the Light of the  
Knowledge of the Glory of GOD in the Face  
of Jesus Christ, let us bless the Lord who has  
shewed us this Light, and with a chearful  
Gratitude let us bind the Sacrifice as it were  
with Cords unto the Horns of the Altar.  
Let us bless the GOD and Father of our Lord  
Jesus Christ, the Father of Mercies, and the  
GOD of all Comfort, who has blessed us  
with all Spiritual Blessings in Heavenly Things  
in Christ; according as he has chosen us in him  
before the Foundation of the World, that we  
should be holy, and without Blamie before him in  
Love. I would call upon you this Day to  
do it, join with me, and with each other,  
in it. Praise the Lord all ye his Saints; be  
thankfull unto him, and bless his Name!  
Praise him, who graciously purposed your Sal-  
vation, and predestinated you to the Adoption  
of Children by Jesus Christ unto himself!  
Praise him, who rendered this Purpose effec-  
tually, and wrought it out by a high Hand and  
an arm! Praise him, who gave his  
own Son, a Sacrifice for you, and to  
bring in Everlasting Righteousness!  
Praise him, who sent his Spirit, as the great Agent  
in his Son's Kingdom, to bring the Hearts  
of Sinners to a Subjection to the Gospel, and  
gently

<sup>a</sup> 2 Cor. iv. 6.

<sup>c</sup> Psal. cxviii. 27.

<sup>d</sup> 2 Cor.

<sup>b</sup> i. 5

<sup>e</sup> Eph. i. 3, 4.  
<sup>h</sup> Dan. ix. 24.

<sup>f</sup> Psal. c. 4.

<sup>g</sup> Eph.

gently to captivate them to the *Obedience of Faith!* Praise him, who has ~~revealed~~ this glorious *Gospel* to you, at so great a Distance of Time and Place! Praise him, who has impress'd your Hearts with a Disposition to regard it! Praise him who has subdued your Prejudices against it! Praise him, who having *implanted Faith* in your Souls, continues even to this Day to *animate and support* it!—Let all *Ranks and Ages* join in this cheerful Song! *Praise ye the Lord*, you that are *Rich in Temporal Possessions*, if you have been enabled to *renounce the World* as your Portion, and to *triumph over it* by this Divine Principle! Praise him, you that are *poor in this World*, if you are *rich in Faith, and Heirs of the Kingdom which GOD has promised to them that love him*<sup>1</sup>! Praise him, you that are *cheerful and vigorous, and capable of rendering him that active Service, which may speak the Gratitude of your Hearts towards him!* Praise him, you that are *weak and languishing, since his Strength is made perfect in your Weaknesses*, and your *Infirmities illustrate the Force of that Faith, which he has wrought in you!* Praise him, ye *Youths, who with this Guide and Companion of your Way, are setting forth in the Journey of Life with Courage, and lifting up your Feet in his Paths!* Praise

<sup>1</sup> Jam. ii. 5.<sup>2</sup> 2 Cor. xii. 9.

ye *Aged Saints*, who stand on the Borders of Eternity, and live in a daily Expectation, that you shall receive the End of your Faith, in the Salvation of your Souls<sup>1</sup>.—Begin that Work now, in which you are all so soon to join! Break forth into one joyful *Antient*, and sing, “Not unto us, O Lord, “not unto us<sup>m</sup>, but to thy Name be all the “Praise of that Salvation, which thou hast already begun in our Souls, and which thy Faithfulness has engaged to complete.” Again,

3. If ~~we~~<sup>you</sup> are sav'd by Grace through Faith, then certainly “they who neglect such a Method of Salvation, are highly inexcusable.”

To be not only deliver'd from Everlasting Condemnation and Ruin, but raised to the Presence and Enjoyment of God above, is so glorious an Exchange, so important a Prize, that it would be worth while to secure it at any imaginable Rate, whatever was to be resigned, whatever to be endured for it. But it is certain, that the more gracious the Proposal and Offer is, the baser and more criminal will the Refusal be. Had some hard Matter been proposed, should we not have done it? and how much rather, when

<sup>1</sup> 1 Pet. i. 9.

<sup>m</sup> Psal. cxv. 1.

50 Such are without Excuse, as SER. II.  
the Divine Oracle only says, Wash and be  
clean<sup>a</sup>? Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and  
thou shalt be saved<sup>b</sup>.—To you, my Brethren,  
even to all that hear me this Day, is the Word  
of this Salvation sent, and brought<sup>c</sup>: Let me  
address you therefore in the Language of the  
Apostle, and say, Take heed that you receive  
not the Grace of GOD in vain; and let me  
add, Behold, now is the accepted Time; be-  
hold, now is the Day of Salvation<sup>d</sup>. Dare  
not to trifle in a Business of such Conse-  
quence; lest if you should neglect it even  
till to Morrow, there should be no Room to  
repeat that Declaration then. That GOD  
should ever offer Salvation at all, and espe-  
cially in such a Method: is astonishing Con-  
descension and Love: And every Instance in  
which that Offer is renew'd, is a renewed  
Miracle of Mercy. But the Day of the Divine  
Patience has its Limits; and if you trifle  
beyond those Limits, and know not that the  
Goodness and Long-Suffering of GOD lead  
to Repentance, this injur'd Mercy will plead  
against you, and it will appear you have  
treasured up to yourselves Wrath against the  
Day of Wrath and Revelation of the righteous  
Judgment of GOD.

4. If we are sav'd through Faith; then  
surely “ we should labour, that this  
“ blessed

\* 2 Kings v. 13.      \* Acts xvi. 31.      <sup>c</sup> Act<sup>s</sup>  
xiii. 26.      <sup>d</sup> 2 Cor. vi. 1, 2.      <sup>e</sup> Rom. ii. 4, 5.

" blessed Principle may be strengthened  
in our Souls."

THE greater *Evidence* we have of the *Sincerity* of our *Faith*, the greater *Assurance* may we justly have of our *Interest* in the *Gospel-Salvation*; and the stronger our *Faith* is, the clearer will the *Evidence* of its *Truth* be. Let us therefore emulate the *Character* of our Father *Abraham*, and make it our Care, like him, to be *strong in Faith*, thereby giving *Glory to GOD*.—To this Purpose let me address you, my *Christian Brethren*, to be diligent and serious in attending the *Ordinances* of Divine Institution, and especially that of *Hearing the Word*; for as the *Apostle* observes, *Faith comes by bearing, and bearing by the Word of GOD*. And it is certain, the better we are acquainted with the *Word of GOD*, the more shall we trace of its *Evidence*; and it is probable, we shall also feel so much the more of its *Energy*, awaking and confirming those internal *Acts of Faith*, which it is our Duty with increasing Vigour daily to renew: And I doubt not, but the *Experience* of many that hear me, attests the Reasonableness of this Address.—Let me also exhort you, to seek after greater *Strength of Faith* by fervent Application to *God in Prayer*; as the *Disciples*

52            *Labour that your Faith*    SER. II.  
ciples that came unto Jesus, and said, Lord, increase our Faith<sup>w</sup>. Plead, that your Faith, in its Original, and in its Progress, is the Work of GOD; and earnestly intreat, that his Work may be perfected<sup>w</sup>.—And to add Efficacy to all, Labour to the utmost to bring forth the genuine Fruits of true Faith, in all the Branches of a Holy Temper, and an Exemplary Life. Thus shew to all that are about you your Faith by your Works<sup>x</sup>; walking worthy of the Vocation wherewith you are called<sup>y</sup>, worthy of Him that has called you to his Kingdom and Glory<sup>z</sup>. For in Proportion to the Degree with which these Fruits appear it will be evident, there is Life at the Root; and you will find, that as the Vigour of our Limbs, so also that of our Virtues and Graces, will grow by Use and Exercise. And in this View let me observe,

5. THAT if we are sav'd by Grace through Faith, then “there is Encouragement even for the weakest Soul, to seek after this Gospel-Salvation, and to hope it shall obtain it.”

GIVE me Leave here to address myself to those, whose Hearts are impressed with their Eternal Concerns, but then feel their own

\* Luke x. iii. 5.      w 1 Theſſ. iii. 10.      x James, ii. 18.      y Ephel. iv. 1.      z 1 Theſſ. ii. 12.

own manifold Weakness, and perhaps may be discouraged<sup>a</sup> (as Young Persons very frequently are,) with observing the Difficulty of Religion.

My Brethren, if your Hopes of Justification were by the Works of the Law, whether the Ceremonial or the Moral Law, these Discouragements were just : Since were all the Sins of your former Life forgiven upon your Return to God, yet through the InfirmitieS of Human Nature, and the Temptations of Life, you would no doubt quickly fall into some New Transgression ; and this one, even the least, would be sufficient to ruin you, and to bring you into Condemnation again. But the Righteousness of Faith speaks an easier, and more gracious Language, when it says, Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved<sup>b</sup>. You know of whom it was said, A bruised Reed will be not break, and smoaking Flax will be not quench<sup>c</sup> : Why should you not then enter into a Treaty with so mild, so gracious, so compassionate a Saviour ? Nay, I will add, Why should you not be saved by him ? Are you willing to accept his Grace ? Methinks, I hear one and another reply, " What do I desire so much, as to accept it ? Feeble and guilty as I am, I would at least bow as low as any of thy Servants, in a thankful Acknowledgment of the Riches and Freedom of thy Grace ; and I would

<sup>a</sup> Acts xvi. 31.    <sup>b</sup> Matt. xii. 20.

54      *Even the weakest may hope*    SER. II.

" would ascribe my Salvation to it in as entire'  
" a Renunciation of all Self-Dependance, as  
" any of them all should do." And when I  
ask, (as it is necessary I should ask,) Are you  
also willing to bow to his Yoke? I persuade my-  
self, there are those of you, whose Conscience  
answers, " Lord, I would take it upon me,  
" with a most thankful Consent: I desire  
" nothing so much, as to serve thee; but  
" I suspect this treacherous and inconstant  
" Heart, that is so ready to forsake thee."  
My Brethren, this Desire of serving him, if  
you know what you say when you express it,  
is the Effect of his Grace; and 'tis a comfort-  
able Token, that he will give more Grace.  
Set yourselves therefore with a cheerful  
Courage, to oppose those Difficulties that lie  
in the Way, and to work out your own Salva-  
tion with Hope and Joy, as well as with  
Fear and Trembling; for it is GOD that even  
now is working in you, both to will, and to  
do, of his good Pleasure<sup>d</sup>; and you have a-  
bundant Reason to hope, he will not forsake  
the Work of his own Hands<sup>e</sup>:

6. If the Doctrine of Salvation by Grace  
through Faith be so Divine and impor-  
tant as we have heard, then let us  
" take great Heed, that we do not bring  
" a Re-

<sup>a</sup> James iv. 6.      <sup>b</sup> Phil. ii. 12, 13.      <sup>c</sup> Psal. cxxxviii. 8.

“ a Reproach upon it, by an irregular  
“ and licentious Behaviour.”

LET the holy Apostle, who is the great Afferter of this Doctrine, be heard as the Guardian of its Honour, when he says, *Shall we continue in Sin, that Grace may abound?* GOD forbid! You plainly see, that this Doctrine, when Scripturally explained as above, gives no rational Foundation, no, nor even any plausible Excuse, for such an InfERENCE, however the Corruption of Mens Hearts may take Occasion from it. And it would be far more reasonable, and much less detrimental to Mankind, to endeavour to root up all the Vines in the World, and destroy all the Animals intended for Food, because Wine and Flesh are sometimes the Occasions and Instruments of Luxurious Riot; than to deny this important Doctrine, because it may be perverted to Purposes unfriendly to Practical Religion. But see you to it, my Friends, that you, if you are persuaded this is the Doctrine of GOD, behave in such a Manner, as to shew, that you perceive it to be, what indeed it is, a Doctrine according to Godliness. *Woe to that Man, by whom, in this Instance, the Offence comes!* It had been better for him, that a Millstone were hanged about his Neck, and that he were drowned in the Depth of the Sea<sup>b</sup>, than

<sup>a</sup> Rom. vi. 1. <sup>c</sup> 1 Tim. vi. 3. <sup>b</sup> Matt. xviii. 6, 7.

56 Bring no Reproach on this Doctrine SE R. II.  
than that he should occasion such Dishonour to God, and bring such a Reproach upon his Truths and his Ways. And give me Leave to say, there is hardly any Consideration in the World, that should cut deeper into the Heart of the truly Good Man, of one who has tasted that the Lord is gracious<sup>1</sup>, and has believed through Grace<sup>2</sup>, than the Reflection of having made such unworthy and ungrateful Returns to God, for that singular Mercy which he has obtained from him, in the Provision which the Gospel has made for his Salvation, in so gracious, and so endearing a Way.

LET me therefore conclude with charging you in the most solemn Manner, before GOD and the Lord Jesus Christ<sup>1</sup>, and by the Honour of that Gospel you so strenuously profess, that you exercise a holy Watchfulness over your selves in this Respect. Consider, my Brethren, how many Eyes are upon you for Evil. 'Tis true indeed, that Charity, that boasted Name, that Divine Principle, would teach Men another Lesson ; it would teach them to mourn, rather than to triumph, over the Faults of them that call themselves Christians. But there is very little of that to be found ; and on the contrary, a great Deal of that carnal, sensual, and diabolical Zeal, which rejoices in Iniquity<sup>3</sup>, and takes the greatest Pleasure in the

<sup>1</sup> I Pet. ii. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Acts xviii. 27.

<sup>3</sup> 2 Tim. iv. 1.

<sup>m</sup> I Cor. xiii. 6.

the Irregularities of those whose Failings ought most to be lamented ; that is, of those who are most signalized by a *Christian Profession*. Remember therefore, and consider, my Friends, that it would be *far better for you to die*, than to *lay a Stumbling Block* in the Way of the Souls of Men ; and to give them any just Cause, for representing the *Gospel* as a *Doctrine of Licentiousness*, or speaking of *Christ* as the *Minister of Sin*.

You solemnly renounce all Dependance upon your own Righteousness before GOD ; and in professing to do it, and to expect *Salvation by his Grace alone*, you do well. But give me Leave to say, that if in the mean Time *you yourselves are found Sinners*, allowing yourselves habitually in any Thing contrary to the Divine Will, the *Renunciation of such a Righteousness* as is consistent with that, will be a very unworthy Kind of Sacrifice before GOD, and do very little Credit to your Profession before Men. And by these Declarations, when compared with so bad a Conduct, you will run a great Risque of bringing your *Religious Notions* themselves into *Distrace*, and will probably build again that which you seem most solicitous to destroy. Let it therefore evidently appear, that the *Grace of GOD which appears unto all Men, has effectually taught you to deny*

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all

*Let Grace engage us to a holy Life.* SEC II.  
all Ungodliness and Worldly Lusts, and to  
~~not~~ soberly, righteously, and godly in this pre-  
sent World<sup>o</sup>. Let the whole World about  
you see, that the Divine Goodness to you, in  
which you rejoice and glory, has had its Effic-  
acy, to purify and humanize your Hearts, to  
fill them with Humility and universal Love,  
and to inspire them with a most friendly,  
benevolent, generous Care for the Happiness  
of all around you, as well as with a generous  
Concern to make your own Calling and Elec-  
tion sure<sup>p</sup>. Nothing will so powerfully plead  
for the Gosp<sup>e</sup>el, as such a Care to adorn it,  
and to seek that SALVATION which is ex-  
tirely OF GRACE, through Sanctification  
of the Spirit, as well as the Belief of the  
Truth<sup>q</sup>.

<sup>o</sup> Tit. ii. 11, 12.      <sup>p</sup> 2 Pet. i. 10.      <sup>q</sup> 2 Thess.  
ii. 13.

F I N I S.











